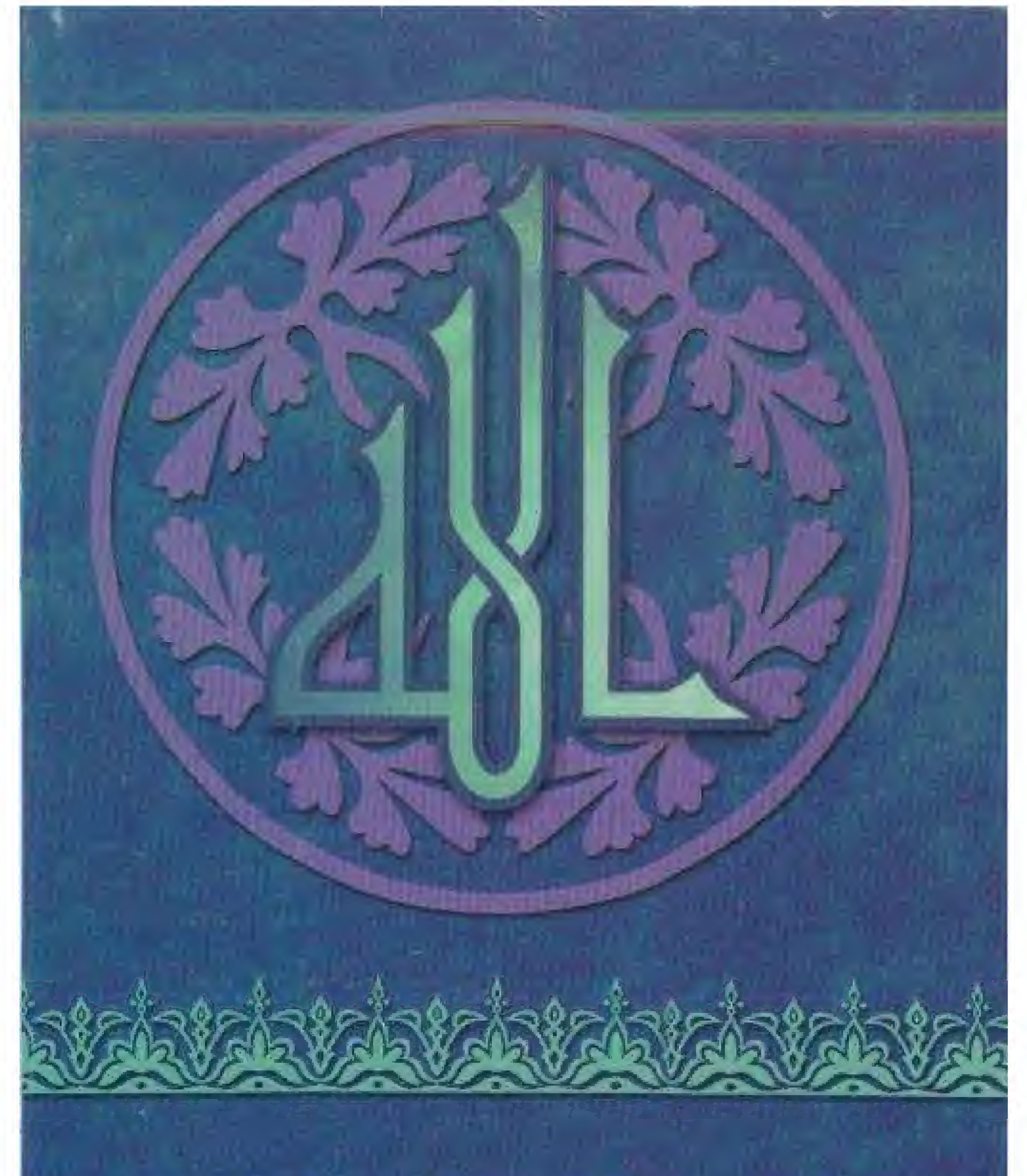
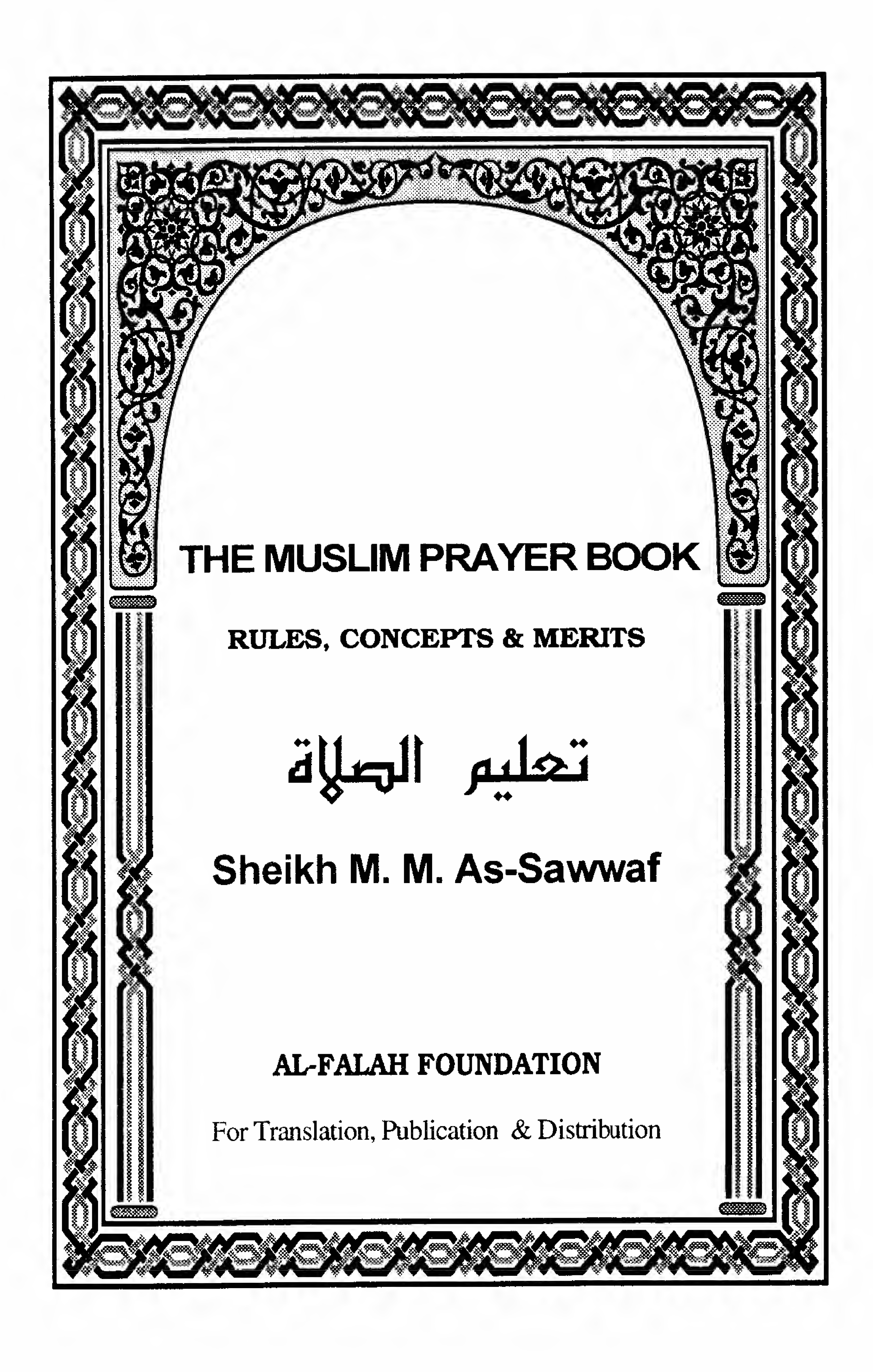


THE MUSLIM PRAYER BOOK

RULES, CONCEPTS & MERITS

MUHAMMAD MAHMUD AS-SAWWAF



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تعليم الصلاة

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER THREE
A GUIDE TO PRAYER



INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Just, and the Wise, Who grants His favor and mercy to whoever obeys Him, and Who is angered by and punishes whoever disobeys Him. He is Self-sufficient, All-powerful, the Greatest, and the Most High. Praise be to Him. Exalted be His countenance and Mighty be His dominion. It is He Who judges, and it is to Him we return.

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. It is He Who has imposed upon Muslims the duty of performing five daily Prayers and addressed them from above the seven heavens to observe the Prayers when He says,

> ﴾Guard strictly your Prayers, especially the Middle Prayer and stand before Allah with all devotion.﴿
>
> (Q. 2:238)

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, the most excellent of worshipers, the leader of the Allah-fearing, and the predominant among prophets.

The book in hand sheds light on the Muslim Prayer. I have written it when I realized the urgent need for something like it. I have become aware of a praiseworthy inclination among many men and young people towards the true religion and ever-lasting message of Allah. They have within them the need

to perform their religious duties, especially Prayer - the cornerstone and pillar of Islam which Allah has made a beacon of His religion and an adornment and an external sign of the Allah-fearing people. The souls of multitudes are wasting away from the grief that springs from the neglect of Prayer, for, by abandoning this great cornerstone, they are shunning Allah. They long to return to Allah and to perform the prescribed Prayers, but they are confronted with their ignorance of the proper manner of performing Prayer. A great number are ashamed to let this bitter fact be known, for when a man looks at himself, he sees that he has grown old and knowledgeable and achieved a worldly status which is to be envied, yet he is unable to perform a simple Prayer - something which even Muslim children, let alone their elders, should know with certainty. This is a cardinal sin which all men should be guard against. I mention this with the utmost sorrow, having myself become aware of it and having found many Muslims in my country in this distressingly sad situation. This is what has prompted me to write this booklet, so that those who read it may benefit from it.

Since every Muslim has the need for the five daily Prayers, the Friday Prayer (*Jum`ah*), the Congregational Prayer (*Jama`ah*), the Prayer of the two Feasts (*`Ids*), the Funeral Prayer (*Janazah*), the Prayer during a journey, and the Prayer for Allah's guidance, I have included these subjects hoping that they will be of value. I have tried to use the simplest terms so that all, young and old, the educated and the uneducated alike, might understand. Those who do pray may benefit from it by correcting their mistakes, while those who do not pray will

learn how to perform Prayer. I have avoided, as far as I can, contentious matters, and mentioned nothing except what has been established as correctly passed down from the Prophet, and what is held to be the opinion of most of the Imams (scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence).

I beseech Allah's guidance in this work for only He can do this. I beseech Him that my words retain their sincere intention, and that He counsels those who may find errors or mistakes therein to pardon me. May Allah grant me success in it! I ask Allah to make all readers benefit from it, to forgive us our sins, our mistakes, and our extravagances, to guide our feet in the true path, and to make us steadfast in our promise to Him, both in this world and in the Day of Resurrection. Allah is Sufficient for me, the Perfect Counsellor, the Perfect Master, and the Perfect Helper.

***M. M.* As-Sawwaf**

CHAPTER ONE

THE STATUS OF PRAYER IN ISLAM AND THE JUDGMENT ON ONE WHO ABANDONS IT

I. Prayer, the Pillar of Religion

Every Muslim says and knows in his heart that Prayer is the "pillar of Religion". It is the line which divides Islam from non-Islam. Islam has not only thus described it, but has made it the pillar of the faith, because of its exalted position, its supreme value, and its importance to Allah and His Prophet. Allah has ordered us to be mindful of it, saying,

> ﴿Guard strictly your Prayers, especially the Middle Prayer, and stand before Allah with all devotion.﴾
>
> (Q. 2:238)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> "The first thing that the worshiper of Allah will be called upon to account for on the Day of Judgment will be Prayer. If it is good, his deeds will be good; if it is bad, his deeds will be bad."

Allah has made Prayer the way to success, prosperity, and happiness:

> ﴾The believers must (eventually) be prosperous who are humble in their Prayers.﴿
>
> (Q. 23:1-2)

II. The Spiritual Influence of Prayer

Genuine Prayer, based on humility and submission, illuminates the heart, purifies the soul, and teaches the worshiper both the refinements of worship and his obligations to the divinity of Great Almighty Allah, for it is through Prayer that the Glory and Majesty of Allah is implanted in his heart. Prayer endows and ennobles man with such excellent virtues of character as truthfulness, honesty, moderation, integrity, understanding, modesty, fairness, and generosity. It raises him up and directs him only to Allah, increasing fear and dread of Him. In this way, his moral standards are raised, his soul is purified, and he sets aside lying, falsehood, evil, deception, anger, and pride and thus rises above injustice, enmity, meanness, iniquity, and disobedience. By doing so, he proves the word of Almighty Allah to be true:

> ﴾Prayer restrains from indecency and evil. And remembrance of Allah is the greatest thing in life. And Allah knows the deeds that ye do.﴿
>
> (Q. 29:45)

III. Prayer as a Remedy for the Heart

Prayer has a form and a spirit. Its form is worship with the body while its spirit is worship with the heart. It is a material and spiritual exercise. The heart and face of one who performs it will shine with divine light and his soul will be uplifted. It is the link between the slave and his Master.

The performance of Prayer is one of the greatest tokens of faith, the most significant of religious ceremonies, and the surest way of thanking Allah for His boundless favors. To neglect it is to be separated from Allah and to be deprived of His mercy, the abundance of His favors, and the plenitude of His generosity. To neglect it is to be deprived of His kindness and blessings.

True Prayer is the remedy for the diseases which beset the heart and corrupt the soul. It is the light which dispels the darkness of evil and sin. Abu Hurairah said,

> "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'Look, if anyone of you had a river at his door and bathed in it five times a day, would any of his dirt be left?' They said, 'None of his dirt would be left.' He said, 'This is like the five Prayers by which Allah washes away our sins.'"[1]

IV. Unity and Equality in Prayer

Equality and justice are made manifest through Prayer. When the muezzin calls: "Come to Prayer, Come to prosperity", all those whose duty is to pray and who hear his

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

call, be they rich or poor, young or old, ruler or subject, assemble in one row with no distinction or difference between them - all of them are worshipers of Allah. They meet on common ground in one of the houses of Allah, thinking only of Him and humbling themselves before Him.

> ﴾And the places of worship are for Allah (alone); therefore invoke not anyone along with Allah.﴿
>
> (Q. 72:18)

Standing behind one Imam, they face one direction, worship Allah, the One Who has no partner, and become humble and submissive, fearing His punishment and craving His mercy. With certainty, that divine blessings will descend upon them and they will be surrounded with His mercy.

> ﴾Pray to Him with fear and longing (in your heart), for the mercy of Allah is near to those who do good.﴿
>
> (Q. 7:56)

V. Judgment on One Who Renounces Prayer

Allah has ordained Prayer and made it the beacon of Islam and the pillar of religion. The Prophet said, "On top is Islam. The pillar which supports it is Prayer and the highest place in it is the struggle for the cause of Allah." Prayer was the first of the religious observances decreed by Allah. It was ordained on the night of the Prophet's journey of ascension to the seven heavens. Because of its importance and the great value which Allah places upon it, He spoke directly with his Messenger,

with no intermediary. For this reason, He severely reproaches whoever abandon it, sometimes considering them to be non-believers and to have strayed from the true path.

Whoever shuns Prayer, shuns Islam and angers his Lord. He breaks the commandments of his faith and sets himself on the road to destruction. By this action, he renderes all his good deeds useless, for he acts contrary to the pronouncements of Allah concerning Prayer; and one who disobeys Allah is virtually one who denies Him for, had he acknowledged Allah's words, surely he would have obeyed the following Divine commandments:

> ﴿And keep up the Prayer at the two extremities of the daytime and in the early reaches of the night. Surely the fair deeds will put away the odious deeds. That is a reminding to the mindful.﴾
>
> (Q. 11:114)

> ﴿And establish regular Prayer. Prayer restrains from indecency and evil.﴾
>
> (Q. 29:45)

> ﴿But when ye are free from danger, set up regular Prayer; for such Prayer is enjoined on believers at stated times.﴾
>
> (Q. 4:103)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> "What lies between a (perfect) man and unbelief is the renouncing of Prayer."[1]

---

(1) Related by Imam Ahmad and Muslim on the authority of Jabir ibn 'Abdullah.

Buraidah said,

> "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'The pact between us (Muslims) and them (disbelievers) is Prayer. Whoever abandons it is a disbeliever.'"(1)

`Abdullah ibn `Umar related that one day, speaking of Prayer, the Prophet said,

> "For one who observes it, it becomes a light, a proof, and a deliverance on the Day of Judgment. For one who does not observe it, there is no light, no proof, no deliverance, and on the Day of Judgment he will be resurrected with Qarun, Pharaoh, and Ubay ibn Khalaf."(2)

Those honored *hadiths* and the words of the commands contained in the Qur'an clearly show the enormity of the sin of one who renounces Prayer. They also indicate what his place will be in this world and in the Hereafter.

Because of these and other *hadiths*, and because of the importance of Prayer in Islam, some of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) held the view that whoever renounces Prayer deliberately becomes a non-believer and many learned men followed them in this belief. Others hold the opinion that if such a person deliberately renounces Prayer, without denying that it is a religious duty, then he strays from the true path and should be punished and imprisoned until he

---

(1) Related by Imam Ahmad and others.
(2) Related by Imam Ahmad and Al-Tabarani.

returns to it. In this way, he would not be a bad example to the populace.

The eminent figures of the Muslim schools of thought held the opinion that whoever abandons Prayer should be put to death. This is what ibn Rushd says in *Bidayat Al-Mujtahid*.[1]

Al-Hafiz `Abd Al-`Azim Al-Mundhiri said, "A group of Companions held the view, as did those who came after them, that whoever abandons Prayer deliberately until its time passes away should be declared an unbeliever."

The above view was held by the Companions `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, Mu`adh ibn Jabal, Jabir ibn `Abdullah, and Abu Al-Darda'. Among those who were not Companions and held this view were Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ishaq ibn Rahawaih, `Abdullah ibn Al-Mubarak, Al-Nakh`i, Al-Hakam ibn `Utba, Ayyub Al-Sakhtiyani, Abu Dawud Al-Tayalisi, Abu Bakr ibn Shayba, Zuhair ibn Harb, and others.[2]

Yet others hold the view that he who deliberately abandons Prayer without, however, abandoning his basic belief in its true religious merit nevertheless strays from the true path and, in order that he should not set a bad example for others, he must be chastised and imprisoned until he resumes Prayer.

The eminent figures of the Muslim schools of thought are of the opinion that he should be killed. But, some of them - such

(1) Cited by *Sheikh* Muhammad Ahmad Al-`Isawiy in his book, *Muftah Al-Khataba wal Wa'z.*

(2) From Al-Hafiz Al-Mundhiri, *Al-Targhib wal Tarhib.*

as Ahmad, Ishaq, and ibn Al-Mubarak - see that killing him is based on his disbelief, while others - such as Malik, Al-Shafi`i, and Abu Hanifa and his disciples - regard killing him as a legal penalty.[1]

Thus, the Law of Islam admonishes severely its members and requires of them sincere adherence to Islamic Law through the continuous practice of Prayer, the most important pillar of Islam and the greatest of religious duties. No wonder then that we see it depicts as a non-believer or as one who strays from the truth, for we read in the Holy Qur'an and we see that he who abandons Prayer, is called an evil-doer and is numbered among the criminals who will go down to Hell.

> ﴿Shall we then treat the Muslims the same as the criminals? What is the matter with you? How judge ye?﴾
>
> (Q. 68:35-36)

Moreover, the Glorious Qur'an distinguishes between the believers and the criminals, saying,

> ﴿Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds, except the companions of the right hand (they will be) in Gardens: they will question each other and ask of the criminals: what led you into Hell? They will say, We were not of those who prayed; nor were we of those who fed the indigent, but we used to talk of vanities with faint talkers, and we used to deny the Day of Judgment until there come to

(1) According to ibn Rushd, *Bidayat Al-Mujtahid*.

us Death.' No intercession of (any) intercessors will profit them. ﴾

(Q. 74:38-48)

To abandon Prayer then is to follow the road to Hell which permits no one to endure and never it leaves him alone, and consumes men with its heat. Entering Hell is a proper reward. Your Lord never causes injustice to anyone. Therefore, whoever violates the teachings of the Prophet, whoever hears the words of Allah which circumscribe his actions and understands them and then sets himself a course of resistance and disobedience, feels too proud to worship his Lord, on him this judgment is not excessive. If he considers for only a moment, he will surely realize that by abandoning Prayer he puts himself outside the neck of Islam and that he has no right to protest against this fair judgment, especially after its description in the Holy Qur'an and after reading a *hadith* such as the following which ibn `Abbas related from the Prophet:

> "The bonds and bases of religion are three and on them Islam was founded. Whoever abandons anyone of them is an unbeliever whose blood is lawful to be shed: witnessing that there is no god but Allah, the ordained Prayer, and the fast of *Ramadan*."[1]

The fact of being associated with something does not entitle one to expect benefit from it when the association is not supported by deeds which are imposed by that association. Let us set some examples.

---

(1) Related by Abu Ya`la with a good rendering of transmission.

First Example

Suppose you belong to an office where you hold an appointment. When are you entitled to be called an employee and take your salary?

Are you not required actually to do your work? And does not the head of your office record the date you begin? Then do you not keep office hours and work until the end of the month in order to receive your salary? If you do not do the work which you are appointed to do, or do not keep at the task until its completion, would the office put up with you patiently? Would they pay you? Of course not? Even if the order had been issued for your appointment, it is the easiest of matters to cancel it and dismiss you.

Second Example

You belong to an institute or a school. Are you not required to attend classes regularly and to prepare all that the staff asks you to do? If you disobey the staff and do not listen to what they have to say, if you break the laws and regulations of the school or institute, will you continue to be a member of it, or will you be expelled? There is no doubt that you would be dismissed and your membership in the institution would be of no value to you.

Third Example

If you join the army, either as an officer or as a private soldier, are you not required to wear a uniform? Do you not pay

attention to the orders of your superiors and obey them with neither question nor delay? If you do not put on the uniform or, if after having put it on, you do not carry out the commands of your superiors and do not comply with the military regulations but rather on the contrary, fail in all the obligations which membership in this honorable profession places on you, do you think you would be allowed to enjoy the benefits, or do you think you would be discharged without delay and denied all the rights which you had been enjoying? I believe that you would expect to be dismissed as being unfit for this honorable profession.

Islam operates in a similar fashion. You accept Allah as your Master, Islam as your religion, and Muhammad (peace be upon him) as your Prophet and Messenger. Are you not required to carry out the obligations of the religion, to perform the religious duties, and to support its first principles? Is it not necessary, to be a member, to carry out the most important of its commands - the obligation to perform the Prayer? This is the distinguishing mark of the Muslim just as the uniform is the distinguishing mark of the soldier. Are you not required to heed the commands of the Holy Qur'an which was revealed by the Lord of Might and Omnipotence and to comply with every single order if you are to be associated with the Qur'an and its community? Are you not required to be guided by your Prophet, to follow his light, and to obey his every command, seeing that Allah has commanded you to obey him and follow in his steps?

If you disobey the commands of your Lord and the instructions of your Prophet, if you put the Qur'an behind you and demolish the buttresses of Islam one by one until finally Prayer itself is torn down, do you think that, having demolished and rejected Prayer, you are still entitled to call yourself a Muslim? Should the mere fact of your connection with Islam be of any advantage to you? Will you retain your membership in the religion or will you be deprived of it? You will be expelled and barriers and fences will be erected between it and you. This answer is in my opinion, according to the Islamic Law, and as you must see yourself, is patently clear and generally recognized.

The Prophet said,

> "What lies between a (perfect) man and unbelief is the renouncing of Prayer."

The unbelievers are the ones who suffer loss.

VI. Hope Lies in the Mercy of Allah

Because of your belief that Allah is Mighty and Omnipotent, Abounding in forgiveness and pardon and Ever Near in His mercy, you should not think that religion is inconsistent with the examples I have given you. You believe that His mercy is all-embracing and closest of all to man, especially one who believes in Him even though his actions are wrong.

I support you in your belief that Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate, Abounding in pardon, and that His mercy encompasses heaven and earth and what they contain. The

extent of His mercy does not grow less. On the contrary, a single drop from the sea of His generosity is sufficient to submerge mankind with a flood of blessings and benefactions. In fact, I believe in this. Yet, please be with me a little while so that we can reflect on some of the verses of the Holy Qur'an and try to understand something of the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In this way we shall see whether the mercy of Allah is so cheap that it can be distributed without cost to whoever asks for it, to whoever does not ask for it, and to whoever does not hope for it; indeed, even to whomever it does not even come to mind, to him who neither thinks to seek nor strives to obtain it.

It is my belief that sound logic, a mature intellect, and the everlasting *Shari`ah* do not accept that mercy is granted to such an extent to everyone. There are those, because of the evil they have done, for whom the mountains would crumble, the heavens would be split asunder, and the earth would tremble. They do not believe in Allah and they refuse His blessings. They treat mankind wrongly and unjustly. They deny Allah and His Messenger and disobey their commandments, heeding none of them, doing everything which their *Shari`ah* commands them not to do.

Do you think they are entitled to obtain the same lofty status in acquiring the divine mercy? They are far from it. It is close only to the righteous. Almighty Allah says,

> ﴿For the Mercy of Allah is near from those who do good.﴾
>
> (Q. 7:56)

﴾My mercy extendeth to all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right and practice regular charity *(Zakah)* and those who believe in Our signs.﴿

(Q. 7:156)

In one of the sacred *hadiths* (*hadith qudsi*), the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reported to have said that Almighty Allah says,

> "How impudent is he who aspires to My Garden without working for it. How can I pour My mercy on him who withholds obedience to Me?"

Mercy is obtained by good deeds, piety, alms-giving, and thinking good of Allah. Faith is proved by the actions which spring from that faith. Faith does not come simply by wishing for it, but by resolution and steadfastness in the soul and by the deeds which attest to it.

Al-Bukhari related that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> "Faith is not wishing but is what is implanted in the soul and attested to by deeds. Wishes mislead people so that they leave this life without having performed a single good deed. They say 'We believe in the good reward of Allah, but they lie. Had they had faith, they would have done good deeds.'"

I hope after this that you have not despaired of the mercy of Allah for it is close to you, ready to be taken. Turn to Allah in repentance and be of the worshipers who prostrate themselves, obtaining the mercy, forgiveness, and favor of Allah which your soul desires. Here lies prosperity and happiness in this world and the next.

Hasten to repent. The door of repentance is always open to those who would enter. Draw close to Allah and Allah will draw close to you. No one can grant you greater help. Perform your religious duties and stand before Allah with humility, with worship, and prostration. Allah will forgive your sins, pardon your misdeeds, and admit you to His mercy. He will give you gardens and palaces. Hasten to true Prayer which keeps you from evil and what is forbidden, which will bring you close to Allah.

But this will be impossible unless the Prayer is humble and sincere before Allah, Lord of heaven and earth. If there is anything of hypocrisy, the labors of one who performs them will be rendered worthless and futile.

VII. The Rejected Prayer

The fundamental point about Prayer is that it purifies the soul, refines the character, and keeps one who performs it from falsehood and all forbidden actions. It cleanses one of base and shameful acts. If we see someone who prays, yet at the same time unlawfully enriches himself with the possessions of others and spreads evil among men, and whose actions are

incompatible with the noble precepts of the religion, who perhaps uses Prayer as a snare with which to capture the good opinion of people, behind which he conceals his many misdeeds, then the benefits which his Prayer should bring upon him and which should restrain him from doing evil will be canceled out.

If we see someone like this, we should know that his Prayer is rejected and futile. It will be rolled up like a bundle of worn-out clothes and thrown in his face whether he likes it or not. His Prayer will avail him nothing and will not draw him near to Allah. Rather, it will increase his distance from Him and incur more loss on himself, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> "He whose Prayer has not restrained him from evil and misdeeds has only increased his distance from Allah."

Furthermore, the *Shari`ah* of Islam rejects the Prayer of one who does not persevere in it, who does not perform the ritual ablution properly, who does not perform it with humility, who does not bow the body, and who does not prostrate himself for an absence of concern for these matters indicates an absence of interest in them. If one does not pay attention to this important first principle, then why should one concern oneself with what follows it?

Anas ibn Malik was reported to have said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

> "One who has performed the Prayers at the rightful times, who has carried out its ritual ablutions, who has carried out the

> requirements of standing, submission, bowing, and prostration, his Prayer shall emerge in shining white. It will say, 'May Allah protect you as you have protected me.' But one who has performed the Prayers at other than the rightful times, who has not carried out its ritual ablutions, who has not carried out the requirements of submission, bowing, and prostration, then shall his Prayer emerge in jet-black. It will say, 'May Allah ruin you as you have ruined me.' So when it arrives where it is intended it will be rolled up like a bundle of old clothes, then he will be struck with it in the face."

Listen to the words of the Almighty, as related in the sacred *hadith*, which explains from whom Prayer will be accepted. Let this be a warning to those who have strayed from the path and those who have adopted religion as a means of achieving their private ends, who pray only for their own requirements. May Allah turn against them while they are so alienated and let them see what He promises to those whose Prayer is accepted!

> "I will accept the Prayer of one who humbles himself before My greatness, who does not display arrogance towards what I create, who does not constantly spend the night disobeying Me, who spends the day remembering Me, who has compassion for the wretched, the

> wayfarer, the widow, and the afflicted. That man's light is as the light of the sun. I will protect him with My Might, guard him with My angels, and provide him with a light in the darkness, and an understanding in the ignorance. His likeness in My creatures is as Paradise in the Garden."

The honorable *hadiths* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) make clear the judgment on those who mix good deeds with bad ones. Can this possibly be advanced as an argument by those who would use it as evidence whereby to discredit religion and Prayer unjustly and with enmity?

VIII. A Weak Argument

Some people, when I have urged them to perform the Prayer, have replied, "Religion lies not only in Prayer. There are many who pray yet their hearts are wicked and their actions outside Prayer are evil. As for us, our hearts are pure... We love and respect religion more than many who pray... and so on." Their argument is weak. They are under the impression that the actions and Prayers of these people which will be cast back into their faces are an argument against religion and Prayer itself. They think that religion should become a tomb which exists only in the heart and should have no outward sign which would demonstrate, if nothing else, the conviction of the heart and the life of this religion.

Fear Allah! Try to find favor with Him! Hasten to do good works before you are distracted! Forge a link between yourself and your Lord with much Prayer, alms-giving, and good deeds!

Know that Islam is not Prayer alone, nor only a pure heart. Rather, it is Prayer and purity, love and loyalty. It is steadfastness, good deeds, and hospitality. It is pilgrimage and bearing witness. It is alms-giving and worshiping. It is struggle for the cause of Allah and sincere devotion to Him.

> ﴿Call upon Him, giving Him sincere devotion, and none besides Him.﴾
>
> (Q. 40:65)

It is guidance and worship, Book and sword, faith and knowledge, endeavor and wisdom, Paradise and Hell; obedience and reverence, a community and an organized society. Islam is a coherent unit, indivisible. It is not possible to believe in one part of the Book and disbelieve in another part thereof. It must be accepted in its entirety. Working to achieve this faith means working for all of it.

O Muslims, fear Allah. Turn to Allah before death overtakes you, for whoever turns to Him, to him He turns, and forgives and grants him His favor. Allah bestows His mercy on one who approaches Him in search of it. Acknowledge Allah in times of prosperity and He will acknowledge you in times of adversity. Turn back to your religion and thrive and seek the help of Allah. Recite your Lord's Book and it will be for you a

treasure and a light. Follow the light which Muhammad (peace be upon him) brought you. Seek the Hereafter through what Allah has given you, but do not forget your part in this world, transient though it may be, and even though it be filled with pleasure and amusement.

Do good and Allah will do good to you. Seek not the wickedness of the world. Perform Prayer and give alms. Bow down with those who bow down. Fight for the Cause of Allah. A great struggle awaits you.

Without meeting Allah by pious deeds, by patience, and by preparation, grief will befall us and we shall become the losers, may Allah forbid! Therefore, fear Allah!

> ﴿Be quick in the race for your Lord's forgiveness for a garden whose width is that of all heavens and the earth is prepared for the righteous: those who spend, whether in prosperity or in adversity, who restrain anger and pardon men, for Allah loves those who do good.﴾
>
> (Q 3: 133-134)

May Allah direct us to the true path, reconcile us to endure obedience, delight us through Prayer, afford us all help, give back the glory to Islam, and predispose to this religion the one who would protect it. Almighty Allah is the greatest Protector, the greatest of Helpers.

CHAPTER TWO
PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

The Meaning of Prayer

The Arabic word for Prayer is *salah*. Literally, it means supplication or glorification; supplication because it represents one of the foremost of its parts, and glorification because its main goal is to glorify Almighty Allah.

As Islam enjoined Prayer on Muslims, the Prophet of Mercy Muhammad (peace be upon him) expounded its nature and entity, and the Companions and their successors followed his suit, and the Muslim scholars wre, and still are, applying the same course, Prayer has been technically referred to:

"The worship and glorification of Allah by specific words and actions, commencing with the words 'Allah is the Greatest' and ending with the words 'May peace and mercy of Allah be upon you'; It is a specially ordered and regulated form which the Islamic religion has brought into being and which all Muslims follow as a light and guide."

Nevertheless the word still retains its linguistic meaning of "supplication" and "glorification". The meaning of our saying "Prayers belong to Allah" is that Allah alone is entitled to receive the supplications whereby it is intended to glorify Him.

The meaning of our saying, "O Lord, bless[1] Muhammad" is "O Lord, glorify him in this life by exalting his name; grant success to his mission, and preserve his *Shari`ah.*" Also, it means "O Lord, glorify him in the Hereafter by accepting his intercession on behalf of his *Ummah* and doubling his recompense and reward." It has been said that its meaning originated when Allah commanded us to "pray for" the Prophet on whom He had bestowed His love, but because we are incapable of discharging that divine duty, we leave it to Him saying, "O Lord, bless Muhammad for You know what befits him."

The blessing of Allah on His Prophet is mercy, that of the angels is asking Allah's forgiveness, while ours is supplication and exaltation. Almighty Allah says,

> ﴾Verily Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet, O ye that believe! Send thy blessings on him and salute him with all respect.﴿
>
> (Q. 33:56)

Prayer is an individual duty incumbent on every sane and adult Muslim, man and woman. A child is required to perform Prayer from the age of seven so that he will be brought up to love it and will make a habit of it. He must be beaten to perform it at the age of ten if by then he refuses to do so.

There are many verses in the Holy Qur'an concerning Prayer. Following are only a few of them,

> ﴾Verily, Prayer is enjoined on believers at stated times to be conducted at appointed hours.﴿
>
> (Q. 4:103)

> ﴾And enjoin Prayer on thy people and be constant therein. We ask thee not to provide sustenance: We provide it for thee. But (the fruit of) the Hereafter is for righteousness.﴿
>
> (Q. 20:132)

> ﴾And establish Prayer and pay alms and bow down in the company of others bowing down.﴿
>
> (Q. 2:43)

There are also many *hadiths* concerning the importance of Prayer, the obligation to perform it, its qualities, and the punishment awaiting those who renounce it. Some of them were mentioned in the first chapter of this book, but should you wish to refer to more of them you should consult the collections of *hadiths* wherein you will find riches and gratifications.

Preparation for Prayer

One is not permitted to perform Prayer without fulfilling certain conditions. Once, they are fulfilled, one may then stand before his Lord to perform it. These conditions are:

First: cleanliness. This includes cleanliness of the body, the garments, and the place where Prayer is performed.

Second: covering the private parts. Properly speaking, these are only two. In the case of a man, it is preferable and prudent that he covers his pubic region, from the navel to knees at both sides, front and rear. A woman's body should be totally covered except for her hands and face.

Third: the time to begin Prayer. Since it is not proper to perform Prayer before the times appointed by *Shari`ah*, we shall define the five times which the *Shari`ah* prescribes later.

Fourth: facing the *Ka`ba*. This means facing towards the sacred house of Allah in Makkah.

Purification

1. General

Islam is the natural religion of civilized man which appeared in the arid Arab Peninsula where cultivation is scanty because of shortage of water. In spite of that, it brought with it proper standards of civilization, demanding complete cleanliness and pressing on people the necessity to adhere to the essential virtues. It established the bases of worship as:

a. Purifying the heart from the uncleanliness of doubt, polytheism, skepticism, deviation, hypocrisy, dissimulation, hatred, rancor, and envy. The Muslim has been told that Allah sees him and that nothing at all may be hidden from Him:

> ﴾Allah knows the furtive look and all that the hearts conceal.﴿
>
> (Q. 40:19)

b. Cleansing the body and purifying it from filth, dirt, and defilement. Almighty Allah says,

> ﴾Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.﴿
>
> (Q. 2:222)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> "Purification is half of Faith."

"The key to Prayer is purification. To say the words of greatness is to begin it, to say the words of peace is to finish it."

In this context, a proverb says,

"Cleanliness is part of Faith."

Purification is the first condition for entering into Prayer. We have said that it includes (i) Purification of the heart and body, (ii) Purification of the garments, and (iii) Purification of the place where Prayer is to be performed.

The body is cleansed with water. Water which may be properly used for this purpose should be the natural water of rain, rivers, the sea, springs, or wells. Its taste, color, and smell must be normal and should any of these three characteristics be abnormal then the water, according to *Shari`ah*, is defiled and may not be drunk nor used. It cannot be used for purification for one would shrink from it in disgust and be unable to swallow it. The view of *Shari`ah* in this respect is confirmed by modern medicine and common sense.

2. Cleansing the Body of Impurity

Impurity falls under two categories:

a. The Lesser Impurity. This calls for ritual ablution or the purification with earth (*Tayammum*)[1] when water is impossible to obtain or when an acceptable reason exists which makes it difficult to use water. The impurity is caused by the passing of urine. feces, or wind.

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(1) The Arabic verb used here is the same as the verb "to pray". This section of the book is intended to clarify an apparent paradox in the Arabic language as related to Islamic teaching. (Editor)

b. The Greater Impurity. This calls for body-washing (*Ghusl*) and is caused by erotic dreams accompanied by ejaculation, or by sexual intercourse. Almighty Allah says,

> ﴾If ye are in state of ceremonial impurity, cleanse yourselves.﴿
>
> (Q. 5:6)

For women menstruation and childbirth bring about the Greater Impurity and call for body-washing.

Ablution

1. How to Perform Ritual Ablution

Almighty Allah says,

> ﴾O ye who believe, when ye prepare for Prayer, wash your faces and your hands to the elbows; rub your heads and your feet to the ankles.﴿
>
> (Q. 5:6)

Accordingly, ablution is a religious duty and without purification Prayer is invalid.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has given a practical illustration of how to perform ablution which is as follows:

First, prepare some clean water, then determine your intention that you do this to perform Prayer. There is no requirement that the intention be spoken aloud or that any formality should accompany it. On the contrary, it is sufficient that it is in your mind and that you are determined, in your

heart, to carry out ablution. Then pronounce the name of Allah by saying, "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful" and wash your hands to the wrists three times, passing the fingers of one hand between those of the other, and rubbing the hands well.

Then, take the water with your hands and put it in your mouth and rinse it three times. Make an effort to use the *siwak*(1) to clean the teeth at the same time as rinsing the mouth. The traditional practice of using *siwak* is fully authenticated.

Alternatively rub your teeth with the thumb and forefinger. Many *hadiths* have come down regarding the *siwak*. Following is one of these *hadiths*:

> "If it had not been too great a burden on my people, I would have bidden them to use the *siwak* at every Prayer."

Then the water is sniffed up the nostrils and blown out three times in order to clean the nose of the dirt. After this, wash your face three times, making sure that water reaches the creases of the face, the outside of the eyelids, and indeed all the face. Then wash the arms to the elbows three times, the right arm before the left. Next take the water in your hands and sprinkle it to wipe your head with your wet hands first from front to back and then from back to front. It is permissible to wipe part of the head with one hand only.

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(1) The Arabic word *siwak* means a small stick (the tip of which is softened by chewing or beating) used for cleaning and polishing the teeth. (Editor)

Then rub your ears, inside and outside without taking fresh water (i.e. using the same water as that with which you wiped your head). Finally, wash your feet three times down to the ankles, the right foot before the left, and working the fingers between the toes, and rub them well.

As far as the neck is concerned, nothing was established by the Prophet (peace be upon him). When you finish the performance of ablution, you are recommended to say,

> "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger."

Then continue, saying

> "O Lord, make me of those who turn to You in repentance and of those who are undefiled."

It is essential that ablution be carried out in the order mentioned above.

This, then, is the ritual ablution which will enable you to stand before your Lord and which will be valid for two or more times of Prayer, provided that it is not invalidated.

2. Wiping over the Socks

This is done according to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The top of the foot is wiped and not the sole. The resident is permitted to do that for one day and night. While the

traveler is permitted to do so for three days and nights. The feet must be cleaned before putting on footwear and it is permitted to wipe over woolen or other kinds of stocks. This is meant to avoid overburdening the *Ummah*.

3. Things Which Invalidate Ablution

Ablution is invalidated if any of the following occur, in which case a person must carry it out again:

a. The passing of feces, urine, or wind. In the case of those who are afflicted with a condition of permanent wetting, their ablution is not broken even though it occurs during Prayer. In this case, they should carry out ablution before every Prayer.

b. Sleeping, no matter what the circumstances. However, if one is sitting down - as for instance in the mosque awaiting Prayer - and is overcome by drowsiness, in such a case ablution is not invalidated.

c. Fainting or becoming unconscious for any reason, be it madness, drunkenness, or drug-taking.

d. Deliberately touching a woman for reasons of lust.

e. Touching the sexual organs intentionally directly and unclothed.

f. Vomiting.

Note: If, knowing with certainty that you have performed ablution, you entertain misgiving that you might have committed one of the above actions, but cannot be certain that you have done so, then your ablution is not invalidated because doubt does not prevail over certainty.

Body-washing (*Ghusl*)

Body-washing is touching the body with pure water, pouring it over the whole body and the hair of the head. A good healthy bath is also a way of cleaning the body, purifying it of the dirt which clings to it, and refreshing it.

1. What Necessitates Body-washing

Body-washing is obligatory in the following cases:

a. After the ejaculation of semen because of a carnal act or even due to thinking of it.

b. After sexual intercourse. Body-washing is obligatory even if there is no ejaculation.

c. Following a wet dream, by a man or woman, of an erotic nature. Body-washing is obligatory if the dreamer should find any trace of semen on his clothes or bed. However, should he see in his dream that which would require body-washing, yet on waking he finds no trace of semen on his clothes or bed, then he is not required to perform body-washing. For a woman it is the same as for a man. Should she see any fluid, body-washing is obligatory, otherwise not. This is according to the *hadith*, "fluid necessitates fluid."

Equally, should a person on waking find the traces of semen even though he has not had a wet dream, he is required to perform body-washing.

d. Following menstruation, a woman must perform body-washing.

e. At the end of forty days after childbirth, a woman is required to perform body-washing. If, however, the hemorrhaging of childbirth ceases before forty days, she performs body-washing to purify herself. There is no requirement that forty days must elapse.

f. When a person newly embraces Islam he should be instructed to perform body-washing following his proclamation of faith.

2. How to Perform Body-washing

Having prepared the water or entered the bath with the intention to remove the ritual impurities, the correct manner according to the Prophet (peace be upon him) requires that you begin by washing your hand three times followed by cleansing the private parts. Following this one should make the ritual ablution except that the legs should be left until the rest of the body has been washed.

Then pour three handfuls of water on your head and pass your fingers through the roots of your hair. You should then pour water over the entire body, leaving no part of it untouched. It is also desirable that, with the exception of the private parts, you give your body a good rub down with your hands.

Body-washing may be performed by immersion in a river or sea. You may also stand under a shower-bath. Having finished pouring water over your body, finally wash your legs

and then begin to dry yourself, praising Allah and giving thanks to Him for this blessing by saying,

> "O Lord, make me repentant and make me clean!"

Two points to bear in mind:

a. Whoever performs body-washing must cover himself. Only when alone and in private or when immersed in water which covers the private parts, nakedness is permitted.

b. Copious amounts of water are not permitted to be used for ritual ablution or body-washing, even when at the side of a river. This is not allowed according to *Shari`ah* so that people will not get into the habit of wastefulness, thus following the dictates of Satan and not Allah, Who commands in His *Shari`ah* that we must be moderate in all things.

Purification with Earth (*Tayammum*)

1- General

One of the dispensations of Islam is that Allah does not impose upon people that of which they are incapable. Because of the importance of Prayer as a pillar of Islam, it is not permitted to abandon Prayer nor to delay it.

Purification is a basic requirement and water is the essential cleanser. However, if you have no water, whether you are on a journey or in an inhabited area, or there is water, but you are ill and fear that its use will harm you, the condition being that

probable harm is severe and certain, or if you are not ill but on awakening in a state of major impurity, are fearful that body-washing may cause you to perish or suffer the gravest consequences due to severe cold, you are allowed by *Shari`ah* to resort to *Tayammum*. Thus cleaning by the use of earth smooths your path, allays your fears, and demonstrates concern for Prayer, the sturdy pillar of religion. Read the following Qur'anic verse carefully and attentively:

> ﴿O ye who believe, when ye prepare for Prayer, wash your faces and your hands to the elbows; rub your heads and your feet to the ankles. If ye are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bath your whole body. But if ye are ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from the offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women, and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand (or earth) and rub therewith your faces and hands. Allah doth not wish to place you in difficulty but to make you clean, and to complete His favor to you that ye may be grateful.﴾
>
> (Q. 5:6)

The word *Tayammum* which the Arabs use for this action means "intention". Hence, when a Muslim cannot find water he uses earth, sand, or dust with the "intention of cleansing himself", and it is not required to cover his hands and face with it. If there should be any dust adhering to your hands at the time of purification with earth, first blow it off and then proceed with the purification.

Allah's wisdom is to provide a substitute for ablution or body-washing so that you will not forsake Prayer from time to time and thereby fall into the habit of abandoning it or becoming lazy in its performance. He demonstrates its importance to us, for even though there is no water and even though one may be ill, it is still our duty to perform it.

If a man is revolted at the thought of using earth or dust and it is contrary to his principles of hygiene, for to put it on the face or on the eyes is something which reason cannot accept, then a Muslim should say to him, "Islam stipulates above all that the dust or earth be clean, wholesome, and unadulterated. This is not harmful even if it gets into the eyes." To some extent the unclean dust which is swirled and carried by the wind blows into a man's eyes every day, but during purification none of it enters the eyes. Purification with earth, sand, or dust is prescribed only in cases of necessity. It comes as a balm to the soul of the believer who counts it as one of Allah's blessings to the Muslim nation through which He has made it easy for it to undertake the instructions of its religion. Moreover, it is one of its special characteristics:

> ﴿Allah doth not wish to place you in difficulty but to make you clean, and to complete His favor to you, that ye may be grateful.﴾
>
> (Q. 5:6)

2- How to Perform *Tayammum*

When forced to purify yourself with earth because there is no available water, look for wholesome dust, either sand or salt marsh. First resolve upon purification with earth, then pronounce the name of Allah saying, "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful."

And, put your open hands, with fingers outstretched, on the dust. Strike the dust with your hands, then raise them. Blowing off the dust which adheres to them, wipe your hands over your face and over the back of the hands up to the wrists. By this action you will be able to perform Prayer, and it will be as if you had carried out the ritual ablution.

If you should awake in a state of major impurity and there is no water to be found, purifying yourself by earth in this way will absolve you from defilement and from body-washing. However you must resolve in your heart to be rid of defilement and pronounce the name of Allah when purifying yourself.

Judgements pertaining to ritual ablution mentioned earlier, are applied here, but become invalid when water is found. Until your ritual purification is broken or until water is found it is lawful for you, with one purification with earth, to perform any of the obligatory or superogatory Prayers. Some jurists hold the opinion that purification with earth should be done by striking the dust twice, one for the face and the other for the hands.

3- Removing Dirt

He who would perform Prayer must perform it wearing clean clothes. In addition, the place in which Prayer is to be

performed should be clean too. Should there be dirt on any of these things one must remove it with water, cleaning it and removing the stain. Foulness which must be removed includes urine, feces, fresh semen (dry semen may be brushed off), the saliva of dogs and pigs, blood, and pus.

A woman must remove all traces of her menstrual period when it ends and perform body-washing. She must do the same after childbirth. Prayer is not performed during her menstrual period or during the time of her post-natal hemorrhage even if it lasts for forty days. She is not required to perform the missed Prayers that she cannot offer during these periods of hemorrhage. However, Fasting goes to the contrary. She is not allowed to fast during these periods, but she must perform the missed days after purification.

A man should not have sexual intercourse with his wife during her menstrual period or following childbirth as this is harmful to them both. The most modern views concerning hygiene are those which have always been held by Islam. Almighty Allah says,

> ﴾They ask thee concerning women's courses. Say, they are a hurt and a pollution so keep away from women in their courses, and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves ye may approach them, in any manner, time or place ordained for you by Allah. For Allah loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.﴿
>
> (Q. 2:222)

Times of Prayer

1. General

A Muslim must not perform the obligatory Prayer until its proper time comes into perfect as stated in the *Shari`ah.* Allah says,

> ﴿Prayer is enjoined on believers at stated times.﴾
>
> (Q. 4:103)

This means that there is a pre-established obligatory religious duty for which the Qur'an has set fixed times. The beginning of the time for Prayer is a fundamental condition for performing it. The times are:

a. The Morning Prayer (*Fajr*)

This Prayer begins at true dawn, which occurs in the east when the light first appears from the darkness of night and extends until the sun rises. He who has completed one *rak`a* of the Morning Prayer before sunrise has performed the Prayer on time. He who oversleeps and awakens after the time for Prayer should perform it immediately upon waking and not delay his duty. Furthermore, he must not oversleep intentionally or be lazy in getting out of his bed for whoever does this suffers manifest loss.

b. The Noon Prayer (*Zuhr*)

The time for the Noon Prayer begins after the sun's zenith of that day. It will normally be at twelve o'clock. but the time varies in different countries. The time for the Noon Prayer lasts until the time for the Afternoon Prayer.

c. The Afternoon Prayer (*'Asr*)

It is enjoined when the shadow of an object is equal to its own length plus the length of its noontime shadow. The time for this Prayer extends until sunset. He who has completed one *rak'a* of the Afternoon Prayer before sunset has performed the Prayer on time, but one is not permitted to delay the Prayer until the sun turns yellow. Should the time for this Prayer be over, his efforts will be rendered valueless, as is stated in the noble *hadith*. The Afternoon Prayer is the "Middle Prayer" which is mentioned in the following Qur'anic verse.

> ﴾Preserve (constantly) the Prayers, and the Middle Prayer, and rise up devoutly to Allah.﴿
>
> (Q. 2: 238)

d. The Sunset Prayer (*Maghrib*)

It is performed from sunset until the end of red twilight. Twilight is the redness which appears on the horizon after the sunset and lasts until the onset of darkness. The interval allowed for the Sunset Prayer is the shortest of all and it is advisable to lose no time in performing Prayer.

e. The Night Prayer (*'Isha'*)

It begins when twilight disappears, although the time for this Prayer extends until daybreak. He who has completed one *rak`a* before daybreak has performed the Prayer on time. The Prophet (peace be upon him) disliked sleeping before this Prayer or conversing after it. Conversation after dark was permitted only for the sake of acquiring knowledge and honoring a guest, and it is preferable to delay the Night Prayer until a third of the night passes. However, if it is feared that the time for Prayer will be missed should it be delayed, it must be performed at once.

The time for the five Prayers has been laid down by Islam. They never change nor do they vary with the seasons of the year.

Note: If the time for the Night Prayer arrives, but the evening meal is ready, eat it and perform the Prayer afterwards with a peaceful and tranquil mind. Note also that the Prophet commanded you not to go to Prayer while needing to relieve yourself.

2. The Call to Prayer (*Adhan*)

The Call to Prayer is the signal that the time for Prayer has begun. Through the use of prescribed words the Muslim community is summoned to attend Prayers which will lead to their prosperity in this life and in the Hereafter.

The Call to Prayer is itself an act of worship which precedes Prayer and as such is one of the most important

religious ceremonies in Islam and the most widely recognized characteristic of the religion. It was introduced in the first year of *Hijra*[1] following which the Prophet observed it night and day, whether at home or traveling. On no occasion until the day of his death was it known of him to break the custom, nor is there any known instance in which he granted a dispensation from the rule. The Companions continued to observe the rule until it became a duty - or the equivalent of a duty - because of the Prophet's order which is preserved in a number of *hadiths*.

3. Description of the Call to Prayer

The Call to Prayer, according to the authentic *hadiths*, is as follows:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah.

---

(1) *Hijra* denotes the date of the Prophet's emigration from Makkah to Madinah and the beginning of the Muslim calendar.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللَّه

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللَّه

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاَة ، حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاَة

Come to Prayer, come to Prayer.

حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاَحِ ، حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاَحِ

Come to prosperity, come to prosperity.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ

There is no god but Allah.

In the Morning Prayer only, after saying "Come to prosperity", the muezzin says,

«الصَّلاَةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ النَّوْمِ ، الصَّلاَةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ النَّوْمِ»

"Prayer is better than sleep, Prayer is better than sleep."

Then he continues with:

"Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest. There is no god but Allah."

When you hear the sound of the Call to Prayer reverberating in the air, let your heart be filled with the

magnificence of the Call and the Glory of Him in whose name the Call is made. Remember the prosperity and success to which you are summoned. Realize that apart from Allah, all great things are nothing. When you consider that there is something in the universe which is great, remember that Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

When you hear the muezzin, give heed to him. Repeat what he says in your heart with all the power you possess until he says,

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاَة ، حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاَح

"Come to Prayer. Come to prosperity."

Here say,

لاَ حَوْلَ وَلاَ قُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِاللّه
لاَ حَوْلَ وَلاَ قُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِاللّهَ

"There is no power and no strength except in Allah. There is no power and no strength except in Allah."

Listen to the *hadith* of the Messenger of Allah as related by Muslim in which he said,

> "When the muezzin says: Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, and one of you should make this response: Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest; (and when the muezzin) says: I testify that there is no god but Allah, one should respond: I testify that there is no god but Allah, and when he says: I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, one should make a response: I testify that

> Muhammad is Allah's Messenger. When he (the muezzin) says: Come to Prayer, one should make a response: There is no might and no power except with Allah. When he (the muezzin) says: Come to prosperity, one should respond: There is no might and no power except with Allah, and when he (the muezzin) says: Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, then make a response: Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest. When he (the muezzin) says: There is no god but Allah, and he who makes a re- sponse from the heart: There is no god but Allah, he will enter Paradise."

When you finish answering the muezzin, ask the blessing of Allah for the Prophet. Then request Allah's favor for him in the words of the traditional private Prayer. Turn your mind to the humility of the Messenger (peace be upon him). He calls on his people to bless him and entreat Allah to grant His favor to him after each Call to Prayer so that mankind will turn to Allah, and Allah alone, and learn that all things are for Allah to do as He wishes and as He chooses, for man, no matter how exalted his rank or authority is, a servant of the Compassionate, the Merciful, of Whom he is always in need. `Abd Allah ibn `Umar, as related by Muslim, said that he had heard the Messenger of Allah say,

> "When you hear the muezzin, repeat what he says, then invoke a blessing on me, for everyone who invokes a blessing on me will receive ten blessings from Allah;

then beg from Allah *Al-Wasilah* for me, which is a rank in Paradise fitting for only one of Allah's servants, and I hope that I may be that one. If anyone who asks that I be given *Al-Wasilah*, he will be assured of my intercession."

The preferable supplication which is said after each Call to Prayer is that which our Prophet has taught us:

«اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ هَذِه الدَّعْوَةِ التَّامَةِ ، والصَّلاةِ القَائِمَةِ ، آتِ مُحَمَّداً الوَسِيلَةَ والفَضِيلَةَ وَابْعَثْهُ مَقَاماً مَحْمُوداً الذي وَعَدْتَهُ»

"O Allah, Lord of all supplications and steadfast Prayer! Grant Muhammad the most favored and excellent position. Admit him to the praiseworthy place that You have promised him."

Then say,

«وارْزُقْنَا شَفَاعَتَهُ إِنَّكَ لاَ تُخْلِفُ الميعاد»

"Bestow upon us his intercession, for You do not fail in Your promise."

4. The Second Call to Prayer (*Iqama*)

After the muezzin has made the Call to Prayer, it is recommended by the Sunnah that there shall be an interval until the Second Call to Prayer during which a person should be

ready for Prayer. He who makes the Call to Prayer should be the same person who makes the Second Call to Prayer. It begins when all the necessary conditions for performing Prayer are fulfilled. When this is done and all have become ready for Prayer, the muezzin stands facing the direction of the *Ka`ba* and makes the Second Call to Prayer, and then people perform Prayer.

5. How to Make the Second Call to Prayer

There are two correct formulae of saying the Second Call to Prayer.

a. The First Formula

اللَّهُ أكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

أشْهَدُ أنْ لاَ إلَـه إلاَّ اللَّهُ

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah.

أشْهَدُ أنْ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللَّه

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاَة

Come to Prayer.

حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاَحِ

Come to prosperity.

قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلاَةُ ، قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلاَةُ

Prayer is to be performed, Prayer is to be performed.

اللّهُ أكْبَرُ ، اللّهُ أكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

لاَ إلـه إلاَ اللّهُ

There is no god but Allah.

b. The Second Formula

اللّهُ أكْبَرُ ، اللّهُ أكْبَرُ ، اللّهُ أكْبَرُ ، اللّهُ أكْبَرُ

Allah is the greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

أشْهَدُ أنْ لاَ إلـه إلاَ اللّهُ

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah.

أشْهَدُ أنْ لاَ إلـه إلاَ اللّهُ

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah.

أشْهَدُ أنْ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللّه

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

أشْهَدُ أنْ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللّه

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاَة ، حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاَة

Come to Prayer, come to Prayer.

حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاَحِ ، حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاَحِ

Come to prosperity, come to prosperity.

قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلاَةُ ، قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلاَةُ

Prayer is to be performed, Prayer is to be performed.

اللّهُ أكْبَرُ ، اللّهُ أكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

لاَ إلَـهَ إلاَّ اللّهُ

There is no god but Allah.

Notes

1. It is recommended by the Sunnah that the muezzin should make the Call to Prayer in a slow and unhurried fashion with a pause between each two phrases, and that the Second Call to Prayer should be made rapidly and that there should be no talking during it.

2. During the Call to Prayer one should face the *ka`ba*, saying it aloud, even though one is alone in the desert.

3. If you miss Prayer due to oversleeping or forgetfulness, then you should recite to yourself both the Call to Prayer and the Second Call to Prayer when you perform Prayer. In case you have missed a number of Prayers, it is preferable that you recite at least the Call to Prayer and the Second Call to Prayer for the first Prayer, but only the Second Call to Prayer for each of the other Prayers.

4. The Call to Prayer and the Second Call to Prayer are not obligatory for women but if they say them then there is no harm. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal related,

> "If they (women) do so there is no harm done, and if they do not do so, it is permitted."

`A'ishah, as related by Al-Bayhaqi, used to make the Call to Prayer and the Second Call to Prayer, leading women in Prayer and standing in their midst.

5. The listener should repeat the words of the muezzin in the Second Call to Prayer as he does in the first Call to Prayer, except where the muezzin says,

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاَةِ ، حَيَّ عَلَى الفَلاَحِ

"Come to Prayer. Come to prosperity."

Here the listener says;

لاَ حَوْلَ وَلاَ قُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِاللَّه

> "There is no power and no strength except in Allah."

When the muezzin says,

قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلاَةُ

"Prayer is to be performed."

The listener says,

أَقَامَهَا اللَّهُ وَأَدَامَهَا

> "May Allah raise it up and make it last forever."

Facing the Direction of the *Ka`ba*

1. General

Islam is the religion of unity and monotheism. There is one Allah, one Prophet, one Book, and one direction to face in Prayer. Muslims of the East and of the West look not only with their eyes but with their hearts towards the Ka`ba, the symbol of unity andthe source of the radiant light of Muhammad (peace be upon him). All who perform Prayer must face the direction of the ka`ba in the holy city of Makkah in accordance with Allah's saying

> ﴿So whence so ever thou startest forth, turn thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: And wheresoever ye are turn face thither.﴾
>
> (Q. 2:150)

He who can actually see the *Ka`ba* should look directly at it. All that one can do, if it is not visible, is to face its direction, for Allah does not place an undue burden upon anyone. Our forefathers in every country have determined the direction of the *Ka`ba* and have pointed the *Qibla* of mosques towards it. You can therefore determine the direction of the *Ka`ba* in your house by reference to the mosque. Alternatively you may use a compass or the stars at night. When you face the Pole star, for instance, you always face north and the direction of the *Ka`ba* may be worked out from this.

2. The Rule When the Direction of the *Ka`ba* Cannot Be Determined

Anyone who is unable to find the direction of the *Ka`ba* because, for instance, of clouds or darkness, must ask some one who does know it to point him in the right direction. But if there is no one to ask, then he must decide for himself which is the right direction and perform Prayer facing the way. His Prayer will be correct and will not require repetition even though he discovered that he was in the wrong direction provided that the Prayer is already ended. Should the mistake be pointed out while Prayer is in progress, he should turn towards the proper direction without interrupting his Prayer.

Should you be performing the Prayer in the direction which you think most likely to be correct, and someone sees you and says that you should face such and such a direction, then turn to it. This movement and change of direction will not render Prayer invalid. This has been established by ibn `Umar, as related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, who said,

> "While the people of *Quba'* were performing the Morning Prayer a man came upon them and said, 'Last night, the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he was commanded to turn towards the *Ka`ba*. So turn towards it.' They were facing Syria[1] so they turned towards the *Ka`ba*."

---

(1) Jerusalem.

If the direction of the *Ka`ba* remains unknown for a long time, one should ascertain the direction each time he performs Prayer. Should he change his mind he should then follow his new decision, but those Prayers already performed need not to be repeated.

3. When the Direction of the *Ka`ba* Is not Obligatory

Facing the direction of the *Ka`ba* is a religious duty which may not be dispensed with except in certain circumstances:

1. When in fear, peril, or sickness, it is permitted to perform Prayer in a direction other than that of the *Ka`ba*, should it be impossible to face it absolutely. The religion of Islam is not burdensome. The Prophet said,

> "If I command you to do something, do what you are able."

And Almighty Allah says,

> ﴾If ye fear, pray on foot, or riding.﴿
>
> (Q. 2:239)

Al-Bukhari related that ibn `Umar said, "(Pray) facing the direction of *Ka`ba* or otherwise."

2. It is permissible for a rider to perform a supererogatory Prayer on his animal by making the motions of bowing and prostrating. The motions which indicate the prostrations should be lower than those of the bows. The direction he faces is that of the animal he is riding. The same thing holds for a passenger on a ship, airplane, or train. He begins to pray by facing the

direction of the *Ka`ba* and continues Prayer in the same position even though the direction in which he is traveling changes.

Imam Ahmad, Al-Tirmidhi, and Muslim related that the Prophet used to perform Prayer on his riding beast when traveling from Makkah to Madinah regardless of the direction he faced. Thus, the Lord has revealed,

> ﴾Whithersoever ye turn there is the presence of Allah.﴿
>
> (Q. 2:115)

This was the Prophet's custom with supererogatory Prayers but not with the obligatory ones.



CHAPTER THREE
A GUIDE TO PRAYER

HOW PRAYER IS PERFORMED

We have seen what is to be done before commencing Prayer. These things have been done since the time of the Prophet and are the inheritance of those who came after him. Now that we wish to begin Prayer, what are our duties and how do we perform it?

Having fulfilled all the conditions for purification and having covered the private parts, the time for Prayer has arrived, stand with your eyes facing towards the *Ka`ba* and your heart facing towards Allah. Dedicate your intentions and actions to Him and resolve upon Prayer to Him.

Prepare your heart and let your soul be in fear of the Lord, for you are about to stand before the Master of Heaven and Earth. Call to your mind the Majesty and Glory of Allah. In the measure you call Him to mind, in such measure will be your consciousness of Allah. Then do the following:

1. Commence Prayer with the Words of the Greatness, that is, "Allah is the Greatest", while at the same time raising the open hands and placing the thumbs behind the lobes of the ears.

2. Then place the right hand over the left and put them together on your chest.

3. After this, say a certain supplication which is called the Opening and Facing Allah supplication. This may be any of those with which the Prophet used to open Prayer after saying the Words of the Greatness and before reciting the *Fatihah.*

Here are three of the supplication formulae which the Prophet used to declare. You are recommended to memorize one of them and use it as the Opening supplication each time Prayer is performed.

a. The first supplication:

« سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ ، وَبِحَمْدِكَ ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ ، وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ ، وَلاَ إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ »

"Praise and Glory be to Allah. Blessed be Your Name, Exalted be Your Majesty and Glory. There is no god but You."

b. The second supplication.

«اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ ، اللَّهُمَّ نَقِّنِي مِنْ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا يُنَقَّى الثَّوْبُ الأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْنِي مِنْ خَطَايَايَ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ» .

"O Lord, separate me from my sins as You have separated the East and the West. O Lord, cleanse me of my sins as

the white robe is cleansed from dirt. O Lord, wash away my sins with water, snow, and hail."[1]

c. The third supplication.

«وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ حَنِيفاً مُسْلِماً وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ، إِنَّ صَلاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ العَالَمِينَ لاَ شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ» .

"I turn my face to Him Who has created heaven and earth, a true believer and a Muslim, not one of the polytheists. My Prayer and my rites, my living and my dying belong to Allah, Lord of the worlds, Who has no partner. Therefore am I commanded and therefore do I submit."

We will content ourselves with this portion of the supplication. The Prophet used to recite it at the voluntary Night Prayer only, but the *hadith* in full (as related by Imam Ahmad and Muslim) concludes:

« اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ المَلِكُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ ، أَنْتَ رَبِّي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ ، ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ، وَاعْتَرَفْتُ بِذَنْبِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي جَمِيعاً ، إِنَّهُ لاَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ ، وَاهْدِنِي لأَحْسَنِ الأَخْلاَقِ

(1) Related by Muslim and Al-Bukhari.

، لاَ يَهْدِي لأَحْسَنِهَا إِلاَّ أَنْتَ واصْرِفْ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا ، لاَ يَصْرِفُ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا إِلاَّ أَنْتَ ، لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ ، والخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي يَدَيْكَ والشَّرُّ لَيْسَ إِلَيْكَ ، وَأَنَا بِكَ وإِلَيْكَ ، تَبَارَكْتَ وتَعَالَيْتَ ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ» .

"O Lord, You are the King. There is no god but You. You are my Master and I am Your bondman. I have wronged myself. I acknowledge my sins. May You forgive all my sins. Only You can forgive sins. Guide me to the finest moral character. Only You can guide to the best. Turn away an evil nature. Only You can turn away from me its evil. I obey You and rejoice in You. All prosperity is in Your hands and there can be no evil in You. I am Yours and belong to You. You are Blessed and Exalted. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance."[1]

4. Having said the Opening supplication, seek protection of Allah before beginning the recitation of the Qur'an.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

"I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed Satan."

(1) Related by Ahmad and Muslim.

This is to be said only at the start of the first *Rak`a*.

In subsequent *Rak`as* it is sufficient to say,

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful."

Which should also be said after seeking Allah's protection from Satan.

5. Then recite the Opening chapter (*Surah*) of the Qur'an reflecting and pondering on its meaning.

﴿ بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (١) الحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ العَالَمِينَ (٢) الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (٣) مَالِكِ يَومِ الدِّينِ (٤) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (٥) اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ المُسْتَقِيمَ (٦) صِراطَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمتَ عَلَيهِم غَيرِ المَغضُوبِ عَلَيهِم وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (٧) ﴾

[الفاتحة: ١ - ٧]

﴿In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee do we worship and Thine aid we seek. Show us the straight path. The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,

those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray. ﴿

(Q. 1: 1-7)

It is according to the Sunnah that each person performs Prayer, be he an Imam, a follower to an Imam or by himself, to say "*Ameen*" immediately after reciting this chapter. Say it aloud where the Prayer is said aloud and whisper it when the Prayer is said quietly. The mosques used to shake and resound to the cry of "*Ameen*" coming from the throats and hearts of the devout bondmen of Allah. "*Ameen*" is itself a Prayer which means "O Lord, answer my supplication."

6. After reciting the Opening chapter of the Qur'an, you are required to recite one of the short chapters such as *Al-`Asr, Al-Ikhlas, Al-Falaq, An-Nas, etc.,* or at least three verses of the Qur'an. It is also required that this recitation takes place after reciting the Opening chapter in the Morning and Friday Prayers and in the first two *Rak`as* of the Noon, Afternoon, Sunset, and Night Prayers, and in every *Rak`a* of the supererogatory Prayers.

7. At the end of the recitation of the Opening chapter of the Qur'an and whatever you might recite after it, say the Words of the Greatness, then bow. It is preferable to raise your hands[1] alongside your ears during the bow and then lower them down

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(1) It is preferable that the worshiper raises his hands on four occasions: first, when saying the opening "Allah is the Greatest", second when bowing; third when he stands upright after bowing, fourth when he stands up for the third *Rak'a*. Al-Bayhaqi, relating from Al-Hakim, says, "We know of no traditional law on which the four caliphs, the ten who were promised Paradise, and the Companions who came after them - were more agreed that it had emanated from the Prophet, than this." (Editor)

to the knees. The Sunnah holds that the head should be leveled with the buttocks, supporting yourself by putting your hands on your knees, keeping them away from your sides. The fingers on the knees and legs should be wide apart and your back should be straight. While bowing speak the name of Allah saying,

(سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ العَظِيمِ) (ثلاث مرات)

"Praise be to my Glorious Lord." (Three times)

8. Rise upright from the bow. It is recommended that you raise your hands alongside your ears. While raising your body say, whether you are the Imam, a follower to an Imam, or alone,

(سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ)

"May Allah hear he who praises Him."

When you are upright say,

(رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الحَمْدُ)

"Our Lord be praised."

This is the minimum to which you may confine yourself in words of praise when straightening up from the bows and it is preferable to add to these words that which has been established by sound *hadiths*.

(سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ)

"May Allah hear he who praises Him."

«رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الحَمْدُ حَمْداً كَثِيراً طَيِّباً مُبَارَكاً فِيه.»

"Our Lord be Praised, with much praise, goodness, and blessing."

(سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ ، رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الحَمْدُ مِلْءَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ، وَمِلْءَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ) .

"May Allah hear he who praises Him. Our Lord be praised, the praise which fills heaven and earth, all which is between them, and whatever You wish to be filled."

9. Having straightened from the bow, sink to the ground in prostration, first onto the knees, then the hands well in front of them, then the forehead, then nose. Place the palms of your hands on the ground with the fingers close together in a natural position and put your forehead between your hands. Your feet should be upright during the prostration and must not be raised from the ground. The tips of the toes must point towards the *Ka`ba* and the bottom of the toes must be in contact with the ground. Do not let the upper part of the foot touch the ground. You must prostrate yourself with absolute humility, remembering always that you have come close to your Lord. While you are prostrating say,

(سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الأَعْلَى) (ثلاث مرات)

"Praise be to my Exalted Lord." (Three times)

You may not recite this fewer than three times, however, you may say it more if you are alone, in which case it is recommended that you say it ten times.

It is also recommended that you should not confine yourself to this phrase but should add to it whatever you like of supplications. This is because the Prophet said,

> "The bondman is nearest to his Lord when prostrating himself. Therefore increase your supplication in such case."

These are some of preferable supplications the Prophet used to say while prostrating himself.

١- اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ سَجَدْتُ وبِكَ آمَنْتُ ولَكَ أَسْلَمْتُ ، سَجَدَ وَجْهِيَ للذِّي خَلَقَهُ فصَوَّرَهُ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَهُ فَشَقَّ سَمْعَهُ وبَصَرَهُ فتبارك اللَّهُ أحسنُ الخَالِقِينَ.

1. "O Lord, I prostrate myself before You, in You I believe and to You I submit. I bow down my face to Him Who has created and fashioned it, Who has made its form good, Who has brought hearing and sight to it. Glorified be Allah, the Most Excellent of creators."[1]

٢- رَبِّ اعْطِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا ، وزَكِّهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا ومَوْلاَهَا.

2. "O Lord, give my soul devoutness. Purify it. None but You can purify it. You are its Lord and Master."[2]

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(1) Related by Ahmad and Muslim.

(2) Related by Ahmad.

٣- اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِمُعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لاَ أُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ .

3. "O Lord, I seek the protection of Your favor from Your wrath. I seek refuge in Your protection from Your punishment. I seek refuge in You from Yourself. I cannot count the praises of You, for You have praised Yourself."[1]

٤- اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيئَتِي ، وَجَهْلِي وَإِسْرَافِي فِي أَمْرِي وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي جِدِّي وَخَطَئِي وَعَمْدِي وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ عِنْدِي ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ ، وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ ، وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُ ، أَنْتَ إِلَهِي لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ .

4. "O Lord, forgive me my sins, my ignorance, my excesses and that of which You know more than I do. O Lord, forgive me my intentional deeds, my error, my intention, and all that is in me. O Lord, forgive me for what I have done and what I have not done yet; for what I have kept secret and what I have done openly. You are my Lord. There is no god but You."

(1) Related by Muslim.

These then are some of the preferable supplications which the Prophet used to say during his prostrations. It is recommended that you should learn some of them by heart and say them, following the example of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Also, during your prostration, you should ask Allah privately about religious and other matters which concern you.

10. After the tranquility of the prostration, the person performing Prayer raises his head saying,



"Allah is the Greatest."

Then, laying the left foot flat on the ground, he sits back on it, keeping his right foot in its original position with the tips of the toes pointing towards the *Ka`ba*. He puts his right hand on his right thigh and his left hand on his left thigh, with his fingers in a natural position close to the knees. He sits composedly then prostrates himself, again saying, "Allah is the Greatest."

This second prostration, the words which are said, and the supplications are exactly the same as in the first prostration.

It is recommended that you say the following private Prayer between the two prostrations:

«اللهم اغفر لي ، وارحمني ، واعف عني ،
وعافني ، وارزقني ، واجبرني ، واسترني » .

"O Lord, forgive me, have mercy upon me, pardon me, heal me, provide sustenance for me, console me. and be a shield for me."

11. When you have completed the second prostration, raise your head saying, "Allah is the Greatest."

This prostration completes one *Rak`a*.[1]

Note:

Learn the elements of the *Rak`a* by heart until you have mastered them in every detail for they are the very essence of Prayer. Whatever we will be saying and explaining about Prayer is based on your thorough understanding of these details.

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(1) This Arabic word is retained since the English language contains no equivalent to signify the complete ritual of one bow and two prostrations. (Editor)

The Five Prayers

Allah has prescribed that Muslims perform the Prayer five times daily. In this way they are cleansed and their hearts are purified. They are linked with Almighty Allah, keeping Him in their minds constantly and everlastingly. Only the devout and pious ones enjoy the rapture of this meeting and taste the sweetness of Faith and worship. Allah has promised that whoever performs these Prayers will enter Paradise. He who does not perform Prayers has no such promise and Allah will punish him or forgive him as He wishes. The five Prayers are fifty in reward, since the good deeds are rewarded tenfold.

Prayers contain both the obligatory Prayers and the voluntary ones. The obligatory Prayers comprise seventeen *Rak`as* a day; two at the Morning Prayer, three at the Sunset Prayer, and four each at the Noon, Afternoon, and Night Prayers. For the performance of these Prayers one is justly rewarded; for their neglect one is rightfully punished. These are the Prayers which are prescribed by the Holy Qur'an.

The Voluntary Prayers

The voluntary Prayers contain twelve *Rak`as*, six at the Noon Prayer and two at each of the Morning, Sunset and Night Prayers. Through these Prayers man will be rewarded and

through them he draws himself closer to Allah. However, one will not be punished for their neglect. The Prophet always paid strict attention to the voluntary Prayers. In him we have a good example and must ourselves pay attention to and be guided by him, for this is what Allah has commanded us to do,

> ﴿So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you.﴾
>
> (Q. 59:7)

We shall now explain in detail the five Prayers together with the number of obligatory and voluntary *Rak`as*.

I. The Morning Prayer

A. General

On waking in the morning say the Words of Witness: "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Then praise Allah Who gives you life after death saying,

> «الحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَمَاتَنِي ثُمَّ أَحْيَانِي وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ.»
>
> "Praise be to Allah Who has caused me to die and then restored me to life. To Him is the resurrection."

Then be ready for Prayer. Having fulfilled all the conditions - the details of which have already been mentioned - turn towards the *Ka`ba* and perform the two voluntary *Rak`as* of the Dawn Prayer, of which the Prophet said,

> "The two dawn *Rak`as* are better than this world and all that therein".

It is a confirmed Sunnah that the Prophet observed these two *Rak`as* even when he was traveling. After the two voluntary *Rak`as*, perform the two obligatory *Rak`as* which might be prolonged by the recitation aloud of passages from the Qur'an. Through this Prayer one may feel the glory of Islam and enjoy with the coming of dawn the sweetness of the Qur'an,

> ﴾Surely, the dawn recital has been witnessed.﴿
>
> (Q. 17:78)

Greet the new day with mercy and praise, beginning it with a recitation from the Qur'an which will illuminate your soul. It will shine in the divine light of the tender dawn which is filled with everlasting mercy.

B. How the Two *Rak`as* Are Performed

We have already described in detail how to perform the first *Rak`a*.

At the end of the second prostration of the first *Rak`a* stand up and say, "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful." Then recite the Opening chapter and a further short part of the Qur'an and follow this with the bow and prostrations in the same manner as you performed in the first *Rak`a*. At the end of the second prostration remain seated on your left foot. While sitting in this position your left foot is laid flat on the ground and the right foot remains upright with the tips of the toes pointed towards the *Ka`ba*. Place your right hand on your

right knee with the fingers together except for the index finger and thumb which remain outspread. Placing your left hand on your left knee, recite the Words of Greetings and ask for the blessing of the Prophet, saying,

«التَّحيَّات للَّه والصَّلَوات وَالطَّيِّبَات ، السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّه وَبَرَكَاتُهُ ، السَّلامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عبَاد اللَّه الصَّالحين أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللَّه.»

"The Greetings, Prayers, and the good things of life belong to Allah. Peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be upon you O Prophet. Peace be upon us and on the devout bondmen of Allah. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His bondman and Messenger.

«اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آل مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْراهيمَ وَعَلَى آل إِبْراهيمَ ، وَبَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آل مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبرَاهيمَ وَعَلَى آل إبراهيمَ فِي العَالَمينَ إِنَّكَ حَميدٌ مَجيدٌ» .

"O Lord, bless Muhammad and his family as You blessed Abraham and his family. Give Your blessing to Muhammad and his family as You gave

> Your blessing to Abraham and his family in the two worlds. You are the Most Praised, the Most Wonderful."

These two parts together are known as the Words of the Greetings.

After this, it is permitted to the worshiper to make those private supplications which grant him the good things of this world and of the next. Indeed this is the very time which is recommended for private supplication, whether the supplication be transmitted from the Prophet or not. However, the Prophet's supplication is preferable. The following are three of the supplications which the Prophet used to say after the last Words of Greetings and before the Words of Peace with which the ritual Prayer ends.

1. `Ali said that when the Prophet used to stand in Prayer. The last thing he said between the Words of Greetings and the Words of Peace was,

> «اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ ، وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ ، وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُ ، وَمَا أَسْرَفْتُ وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي ، أَنْتَ الْمُقَدِّمُ وَأَنْتَ الْمُؤَخِّرُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ.»

> "Oh Lord, forgive me for what I have done and what I have not done; for what I have kept secret and what I have done openly; for my excess and of that which you

know more than I do. You provide and You take away. There is no god but You."(1)

2. `Abd Allah ibn `Amru said that Abu Bakr said to the Prophet "Teach me a private Prayer that I may say during the ritual Prayer." The Prophet said,

"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ظُلْماً كَثِيراً ولاَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ فَاغْفِرْ لِي مَغْفِرَةً مِنْ عِنْدِكَ وَارْحَمْنِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ»

"O Lord, I have done the greatest wrong. Only You can forgive sins. Grant me forgiveness and mercy. You are the All Merciful, the All Forgiving."(2)

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ البُخْلِ وَالكَسَلِ وأَرْذَلِ العُمُرِ وَعَذَابَ القَبْرِ وَفِتْنَةِ المَحْيَا وَالمَمَات.»

"O Lord, I seek your protection from meanness, from laziness, from a base life, from the torment of the grave, and from the trial of living and dying."

There are many other Prayers but for now let us content ourselves with these in the hope that they will be sufficient to avail us with Allah.

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(1) Related by Muslim.

(2) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

After this, you should say the Words of Peace. First turn your head to the right saying,

السَّلامُ عليكُمْ ورَحْمةُ اللّه

"Peace and mercy of Allah be upon you."

Then turn your head to the left saying,

السَّلامُ عليكُمْ ورَحْمةُ اللّه

"Peace and mercy of Allah be upon you."

Although this concludes Prayer, it has been related that the Prophet, after saying the Words of Peace twice, used to say certain supplications. It is according to the Sunnah that the Muslim memorizes them and, taking Allah's Messenger as an example, also says them. Here is what he used to say:

1. Thawban said, "When the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) finished his Prayer, he used to ask Allah's forgiveness three times, saying,

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلامُ ، تَبَارَكْتَ يَاذَا الجَلاَلِ والإِكْرَامِ »

'O Allah, You are peace and peace comes from You. Blessed be You, the Possessor of Majesty and Reverence.'"

2. It was related by 'Abd Al-Rahman ibn Ghunaim that the Prophet said,

« مَنْ قَالَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْصَرِفَ وَيُثْنِي رِجْلَهُ مِنَ صَلاةِ المَغْرِبِ وَالصَّبْحِ ، لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّه وَحْدَهُ

لاَ شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ عَشْرَ مَرَّاتٍ ، كُتِبَ لَهُ بِكُلِّ وَاحِدَةٍ عَشْرُ صَدَقَاتٍ وَمُحِيَتْ عَنْهُ عَشْرُ سَيِّئَاتٍ وَرُفِعَ لَهُ عَشْرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَكَانَتْ حِرْزاً مِنْ كُلِّ مَكْرُوهٍ وَحِرْزاً مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ، وَلَمْ يَحِلَّ لِذَنْبٍ يُدْرِكُهُ إِلاَ الشِّرْكُ فَكَانَ مِنْ أَفْضَلِ النَّاسِ عَمَلاً إِلاَ رَجُلاً يَفْضُلُهُ يَقُولُ أَفْضَلُ مِمَّا قَالَ .»

"Whosoever says before turning away from the Night and Morning Prayers, 'There is no god but Allah. He is One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and His is the praise. In His hand is prosperity. He brings life and death. He has power over all things.', will be rewarded that each time shall be as giving ten charities, and ten bad deeds will be wiped out. He will be raised ten ranks. It will be a protection against all adversity, a protection against the accursed Satan. No sin will consume him but that of polytheism. He will become the finest of men in his deeds, being bettered only by one who says anything better than what he has said."

3. Al-Mughira ibn Shu`ba related that the Prophet used to say at the end of every obligatory Prayer.

«لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لاَ شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الحَمْدُ ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ اللَّهُمَّ لاَ مَانِعَ لِمَا أَعْطَيْتَ وَلاَ مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ ، وَلاَ يَنْفَعُ ذَا الجَدِّ مِنْكَ الجَدُّ .»

"There is no god but Allah. He is One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and His is the praise. He has power over all things. O Lord, none may withhold what You have given and none may give what You have withheld. His fortune will in no way serve the rich man in Your eyes."

At the end of each Prayer the Prophet used to recite the verse of the Throne which is :

﴿اللَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الحَيُّ القَيُّومُ لاَ تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلاَ نَومٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلاَ يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلاَّ بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَلاَ يَؤُدُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ العَلِيُّ العَظِيمُ .﴾

﴿Allah; there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-sustaining Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there who can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before, after, or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His Knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them, for He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory).﴾

(Q. 2:255)

You should memorize it well and recite it immediately after each Prayer. Whoever recites it after his Prayer, is in Allah's protection until the next Prayer.

The Prophet used to recite the chapter of Al-Falaq and An-Nas, immediately after Prayer. To these he added the chapter entitled "Al-Ikhlas". He also used to say.

اللَّهُمَّ أَجِرْنِي مِنَ النَّارِ

"O Lord, preserve me from the Fire."

seven times immediately after the Morning Prayer and likewise after the Sunset Prayer before speaking to anyone. To this he used to add, seven times, the words.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الجَنَّةَ

"O Lord, I ask You for Paradise."

Not only this, but he used to say the words of Glory,

سُبْحَانَ اللّٰه

(Glory be to Allah),

the Words of Praise ,

الحَمْدُ للّٰه

(Praise be to Allah),

and the Words of Greatness

اللّٰهُ أَكْبَرُ

(Allah is the Greatest)

each thirty-three times and to make up a hundred phrases, he would add:

لاَ إلهَ إلاَّ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ لاَشَرِيكَ لَه ، لَه المُلْكُ وَلَهُ الحَمْدُ وهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيءٍ قَدِيرٌ.

"There is no god but Allah. He is One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and His is the praise. He has power over all things."

He would run them all together saying,

« اللّٰهُ أَكْبَرُ وَسُبْحَانَ اللّٰه والحَمْدُ للّٰه. اللّٰهُ أَكْبَرُ وَسُبْحَانَ اللّٰه وَالحَمْدُ للّٰه. »

"Allah is the Greatest, glory be to Allah,
praise be to Allah, Allah is the Greatest,
glory be to Allah, and praise be to Allah,"

and so on until he had said each phrase thirty-three times.

In this manner the Prophet brought his Prayer to an end, saying the Words of Peace, Glory, Greatness, and Praise; seeking Allah's forgiveness and making private supplication to Him. His tongue was always moist with the constant mention of the Name of Allah, whether he was standing, sitting, or lying on his side. He would meditate on the creation of heaven and earth. Each thought was a lesson, each silence was a thought, and every word was a mention of the Name of Allah.

It is fitting that we should do as he did; say a private Prayer when he did; and copy off him in his virtuous habits, word for word:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾

﴿Ye has indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah.﴾

(Q. 33:21)

II. The Noon Prayer

A. General

When the day is half done, a man stricken with fatigue and weary from work, seeks spiritual relief. It is at this time that he performs the Noon Prayer, an ablution which helps to restore his bodily vigor. He then turns towards the *Ka`ba* and is alone with his Lord. In spiritual communication with his Creator, he forgets his labor and his spiritual vigor is restored. Upon leaving Prayer his lethargy will have been shaken off and he will return to his work with renewed vigor and determination.

The Noon Prayer has four supererogatory *Rak`as* that precede the obligatory Prayer. According to one confirmed Sunnah, two *Rak`as* are performed before the obligatory Prayer (which has four *Rak`as*) and two supererogatory *Rak`as* after it. The recitation during the whole of the Noon Prayer is said to oneself, not aloud, whether one is leading Prayer, being led in Prayer, or alone.

B. How to Perform the Four *Rak'as*

We have described the Morning Prayer which consists of two *Rak`as*, in detail. If you know it well it will be easy for you to perform all Prayers. When Prayer consists of four *Rak`as,* it is the Noon, Afternoon, or Night Prayer.

When you have performed the first two *Rak`as* sit back to recite the Words of Greetings for the first time. After you have seated, recite the Words of Greetings as follows:

«التَّحيَّات للَّه والصَّلَوات والطَّيِّبَات ، السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ ورحْمَةُ اللَّه وبَرَكَاتُهُ ، السَّلامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلى عِبَاد اللَّه الصَّالحين أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللَّه .»

"The Greetings, Prayers, and the good things of life belong to Allah. Peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be upon you O Prophet. Peace be upon us and on the devout bondmen of Allah. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His bondman and Messenger."

After this rise to your first place, put the right hand over the left and continue the Prayer performing the third *Rak`a* and then the fourth *Rak`a* during which you should recite only the Opening chapter of the Qur'an. At the end of the fourth *Rak`a* sit back and recite the first and last parts of the Words of Greetings - then make your supplications, and end with the Words of Peace. The obligatory Prayer is followed by two supererogatory *Rak`as* .

C. Important Note

If you arrive at the mosque and see that Prayer has begun and that the Imam is praying with the people, do not perform any supererogatory Prayer but join the congregation and follow

the Imam. The Messenger of Allah said,

> "That once the Prayer is being performed, no Prayer except the obligatory Prayer is permitted."

This applies to all Prayers and is not specifically for one time rather than another. According to the command of the Prophet you must follow the Imam even if you know that there is sufficient time for the supererogatory Prayer and that you can then catch him up.

III. The Afternoon Prayer

Almighty Allah says,

> ﴾Guard strictly your Prayers, especially the Middle Prayer, and stand before Allah with all devotion.﴿
>
> (Q. 2:238)

According to most authorities, the Middle Prayer is the Afternoon Prayer. It consists of four obligatory *Rak`as* which are performed exactly as the four *Rak`as* of the Noon Prayer. During the first two *Rak`as* recite the Opening chapter of the Qur'an and another chapter with it, then sit back for the first Words of Witness. In the second two *Rak`as* recite only the Opening chapter of the Qur'an and at the end of the fourth *Rak`a* sit back for the final Words of Witness, concluding with the Words of Peace.

The performance of supererogatory Prayers in the Afternoon is not confirmed, however there are four supererogatory *Rak`as* to be performed before the obligatory ones although this also is not supported by a confirmed Sunnah. Two *Rak`as* may also be performed.[1]

Recitation during the Afternoon Prayer is performed silently to oneself throughout all *Rak`as*. Until the time comes for the Sunset Prayer, performing Prayer after the Afternoon Prayer is to be avoided.

IV. The Sunset Prayer

The Muslim starts the day with mercy (Prayer is a mercy), praising and glorifying Almighty Allah, and ends his day with mercy and thanks, Prayer to his Lord Who changes night into day, day into night, and one thing into another.

There are three obligatory *Rak`as* in the Sunset Prayer. The first two *Rak`as* are performed by reciting aloud after which one sits back for the first Words of Witness. Then rise to your first stand and perform the third *Rak`a* reciting only the Opening chapter of the Qur'an. After the second prostration of this *Rak`a* sit back for the last Words of Witness and recite the whole of the Words of Greetings. After supplication the obligatory Prayer concludes with the Words of Peace.

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(1) Sheikh Sayid Sabiq in his well-known *Fiqh-us-Sunnah* says, "Many *hadiths* have been related about the *Sunnah* Prayer before *'Asr* and they support each other." (Publisher)

Following the obligatory Prayer are two supererogatory *Rak`as* which are a confirmed Sunnah.

Note:

All the supererogatory *Rak`as* are not performed reciting aloud but to oneself. Reciting aloud only takes place during the two obligatory *Rak`as* of the Morning Prayer and the first two obligatory *Rak`as* of the Sunset and Night Prayers. During the remainder of the obligatory *Rak`as*, recitation is to oneself.

V. The Night Prayer

This consists of four obligatory *Rak`as* which are performed in the same way as are the four *Rak`as* of the Noon Prayer except that the recitations in the first two *Rak`as* are made aloud. The obligatory *Rak`as* are followed by two supererogatory *Rak`as*, which are in accordance with confirmed supererogatory practices. Before the obligatory *Rak`as* it is permitted to perform two or four supererogatory *Rak`as*.

VI. The *Witr* Prayer [1]

The meaning of the Arabic name for this Prayer is "odd" and is the name given to the single *Rak`a* which is separated from all which has gone before.

The *Witr* Prayer is a confirmed supererogatory practice and is indeed the best attested of the traditions. According to some Imam*s* it has the force of obligation.

(1) Odd Prayer performed after the Night Prayer.

The minimum number of *Rak`as* in the *Witr* Prayer is one and the maximum is thirteen. The best number is three and this is what most Muslims do today.

The author of *Al-Musawa* says, "In the view of most scholars, the minimum number of *Rak`as* in the *Witr* Prayer is one and the maximum is eleven or thirteen. The nearest to perfection is three, but to exceed that number is better. The Prophet used to perform three *Rak`as*. During the first he would recite after the Opening chapter, 'Al-A`la', in the second 'Al-Kafirun', and in the third 'Al-Ikhlas', 'Al-Falaq', and 'An-Nas'.

The time for the *Witr* Prayer is from the end of the Night Prayer until daybreak and it is the last Prayer of the night. Since this is so, and in order that its performance shall not be a burden, many ways have been related for performing it - all of them are correct:

1. The Three *Rak`as* are all linked together, therefore you do not sit back except after the third in which the whole of the Words of Greetings are recited, followed by the Words of Peace. This method prevents it from being like the Sunset Prayer. The Prophet forbade that the *Witr* Prayer should resemble the Sunset Prayer.

2. The second form is to perform two *Rak`as* and round them off with the Words of Peace and then to perform a single *Rak`a*.

3. In this method the three *Rak`as* are not separated by the Words of Peace, but rather by sitting back after the first two *Rak`a* and then by saying at the third *Rak`a* the Words of *Qunut*,[1] then bowing. In each *Rak`a* the Opening chapter and another chspter are recited. If one wishes to say the Words of *Qunut*, he should first recite the Words of Greatness and then raise the hands. Either of these two private supplications are a recited,

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْتَعِينُكَ ، وَنَسْتَغْفِرُكَ ، وَنَسْتَهْدِيكَ ، وَنُؤْمِنُ بِكَ ، وَنَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ ، وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْكَ ، وَنُثْنِي عَلَيْكَ الخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ نَشْكُرُكَ وَلَا نَكْفُرُكَ ، وَنَخْلَعُ وَنَتْرُكُ مَنْ يَفْجُرُكَ.»

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(1) Private supplication.

(i) "O Lord, we seek help from You, we seek Your forgiveness, we seek Your guidance. We believe in You. We turn in repentance to You. We place our trust in You. We laud Your name. We give thanks to You for the prosperity You have bestowed. We do not turn from You in disbelief. We renounce and turn away from him who disobeys You and breaks Your commandments."

اللَّهُمَّ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ ، وَلَكَ نُصَلِّي وَنَسْجُدُ ، وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْعَى وَنَحْفِدُ ، نَرْجُو رَحْمَتَكَ وَنَخْشَى عَذَابَكَ ، إِنَّ عَذَابَكَ الجِدَّ بِالكُفَّار مُلحِقٌ.

"O Lord, we worship You. To You we pray and to You we prostrate. To You we hasten to work for You and to serve You. We beg for Your mercy and fear Your punishment. Your punishment will overtake and strike the unbelievers."

«اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ ، وَعَافِنِي فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ ، وَتَوَلَّنِي فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ ، وَبَارِكْ لِي فِيمَا أَعْطَيْتَ ، وَقِنِي شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ ، إِنَّهُ لَا يَذِلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ ، وَلَا يَعِزُّ مَنْ عَادَيْتَ ، تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ .»

(ii) "O Lord, lead me to the true Faith with those You have guided. Pardon me with those You have pardoned. Protect me with those You have protected. Bless me with what You have given. Keep me safe from the evil You have ordained for You decree and none decrees upon You. Noone who is in Your care is brought down and noone is honored whom You show enmity. O Lord, You are Most Praised, Most Sublime."

According to many Imam*s*, the *Qunut* supplication is not said except in the second half of *Ramadan* but according to the Hanafis it may be recited throughout the year. Others, including Imam Malik hold that it is incorrect to say them at any time of the year.

With the ending of the *Witr* Prayer, the Night Prayer and the five Prayers are complete. In this way the Muslim spends his day and night in worship, obedience, and sincerity of purpose to Allah, Lord of Heaven and Earth, and goes to sleep with praise, exaltation, thanks and Prayer to Allah, just as he awakes in the morning.

Some Important Notes

1. While you are performing Prayer you must observe the proprieties and rules. You must not speak or look to your right or left nor move your limbs or body other than as custom requires. If you speak during Prayer, concern yourself with anything not connected with the Prayer, or deliberately break

any of the rules, your Prayer is invalid and you must do it again, this time fulfilling all the required conditions.

2. When you are performing Prayer, do not raise your eyes to heaven, and do not close them. Your eyes should be open. If you are standing you should direct your gaze to the spot where you will be prostrating yourself. If you are bowing you should direct your gaze to the top of your feet. When you sit back to say the Words of Greetings, look at your right hand and the finger which will be raised during the words of Witness.

3. You are permitted to perform Prayer wearing shoes when this is done you must first turn them over and look at the soles. Should you see any wetness or defilement wipe it off on the ground. You may then perform Prayer in them. It is a supererogatory practice to perform Prayer wearing shoes so as to be differentiated from the Jews.

The whole earth is a mosque and ritually pure, therefore pray wherever you may be when the time for Prayer arrives; but never in a cemetery, in the bathroom or where body-washing is performed, for Prayer performed by a person in these places is invalid.

4. If you have been eating garlic, onions, leeks, or anything similar which has an unpleasant odor, you should not enter the mosque thereby causing annoyance to the worshipers, but rather wait until the odor has dissipated.

5. It is a supererogatory custom to say, on entering the mosque:

« بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالسَّلاَمُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي ، وَافْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ . »

"In the name of Allah. Peace be on the Messenger of Allah. O Lord, forgive me my sins and open to me the gates of Your mercy."

You should step inside with the right foot first and leave with the left foot first, saying:

« بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالصَّلاَةُ وَالسَّلاَمُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي ، وَافْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ فَضْلِكَ . »

"In the Name of Allah. Prayers and peace be on the Messenger of Allah. O Lord, forgive me my sins, and open to me the gates of Your favor."

6. A person performing the Prayer may not allow any thoughts to enter his mind which are contrary to a state of humility. On the contrary, he must concern himself only with remembrance of Allah and his dependence on Him. If such a thought comes to him, his Prayer is not made invalid but he must put it out of mind and return to humility and thinking of the Majesty of Allah before Whom he is standing.

7. If in course of Prayer a snake or scorpion should pass by, then kill it. This action will not invalidate Prayer. If a small child should cling to you while you are performing Prayer, either put him to one side or carry him on your shoulder and continue Prayer. If someone knocks on the door while you are

performing Prayer and there is no one else in the house, go to the door and open it. These simple movements will not invalidate Prayer.

8. A Muslim should not pass in front of anyone performing Prayer no matter what inconvenience the waiting may cause. The worshiper should see that some sort of a screen is placed in front of him such as a pole, a tree, a wall, a chair, an upright stick, or draw a line on the ground if he is unable to do anything else. It is permitted to pass on the other side of this screen. If however, anyone passes between this mark and the worshiper, the worshiper may push him away and if he refuses to go then he may fight with him, for surely the intruder is an evil.

A marriageable woman passing immediately in front of a worshiper invalidates Prayer[1] except in the Sacred Mosque of the Holy City of Makkah where this is permitted to pass, even though the person is a marriageable woman.

9. If some calamity should befall the individual or the community such as an enemy attack or the onset of an epidemic, or some other emergency, then saying *Qunut* supplication during each of the five Prayers becomes strongly confirmed for the worshiper, whether he be alone or in a congregation, until the calamity has passed. Then the practice ceases.

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(1) According to the majority of scholars, Prayer is not invalidated by the passings of anything - not only the marriagable woman - in front of the worshiper. For more details see ibn Rushd's *Bidayt Al-Mujtahid wa Nihait Al-Muqtasid*, pp. 144-145. (Trans.)

The *Qunut* supplication is recited only during the last obligatory *Rak`a*. The worshiper raises his hands after rising from the last bowing and makes a private Prayer of himself and his community, invoking Allah against the enemies of his people and country by any supplication that he wishes.

10. It is permitted to say the Words of Praise (*Al-Hamdu Lillahi*) during Prayer for a favor which has taken place or for a sneeze. If a worshiper should come on a verse concerning punishment, it is required by Sunnah that he should seek refuge in Allah from it. If he should recite,

> ﴿Has not He the Power to give life to the dead.﴾
>
> (Q. 75:40)

and other verses which ask a question of this kind, he should then say, *Bala* "Yes." If someone should say, "Peace be upon you" while you are performing Prayer, answer him with no more than a gesture.

The Prostration of Forgetfulness

Man is subject to forgetfulness, so if you should forget something while performing your Prayer either doing something which is not prescribed or leaving something out - you must perform two prostrations, similar to those in Prayer, reciting the Words of Greatness while going to the ground and rising at the end of the Words of Greetings. After this recite the Words of Peace.

If you are in doubt during the performance of Prayer, whether you have completed one or two *Rak`as,* you should regard it as one. If you are in doubt whether you have completed two or three, you should count them as two. And, if you are in doubt whether you have completed three or four you should count them as three. The *Rak`as* about which you are in doubt should then be completed reciting the Words of Peace either before them or after them. Either way was established by the Messenger of Allah. If you forget to say the first Words of Witness, perform two *Rak`as* and stand up for the third without sitting back. Complete the Prayer, then make two further prostrations before or after the Words of Peace of the last *Rak`a*. This atones for your act of forgetfulness.

If it is happened, while performing a congregational Prayer, that the Imam forgets something, both the Imam and the follower must perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness, but if the follower (*ma'mum*) forgets something, he is not required to perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness on both parties.

If you are in the mosque awaiting Prayer, whether it be Friday or any other day, and you hear a reader of the Qur'an reciting a verse of prostration, then perform a single prostration. This is known as the Prostration of Recitation.

Congregational Prayer

Islam is the religion of unity and monotheism. It demands the acceptance of the Oneness of Almighty Allah, the existence of the one Word of Allah, and a tight clinging to the strong bond which links us with Him. It also requires Muslims to gather together for Prayer in the mosques, to get to know each other, and to treat each other with truth and patience. Islam considers congregational Prayer to be twenty-seven times better than solitary Prayer, which demonstrates how glorious and important is the act of praying together. Here are some of the *hadiths* of the Messenger of Allah regarding the superiority of congregational Prayer.

(i) Ibn `Umar related that the Prophet said,

> "Praying together is twenty-seven times better than the individual praying alone."[1]

(ii) Abu Al-Darda' heard the Prophet saying:

> "There were never three villagers or bedouin who did not perform Prayer together and who were not overpowered by Satan. You must group together (in Prayer) for the wolf eats the sheep which is away from the flock."[2]

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(1) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

(2) Related by Abu Dawud and Al-Nasa'i.

(iii) Mu`adh ibn Anas quotes the Messenger of Allah as saying,

> "It is nothing but abhorrent, nothing but disbelief, nothing but hypocrisy, that whoever hears Allah's caller calling to Prayer, does not respond."(1)

(iv) Ibn Umm Maktum related,

> "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I am blind and my house is far away. My guide is not suitable for me. Do I not have permission to pray at home? He said, 'Can you hear the Call?' I said, 'Yes'. He said, 'There is no excuse for you.'"(2)

In another version of this *hadith* related by Ahmad and Al-Tabarani, the conversation went,

> "Ibn Umm Maktum said, O Messenger of Allah, my house is a long way off and I have become blind, yet I hear the Call." The Prophet said, "If you hear the Call you must answer it even if you have to crawl and drag yourself over the ground."

You will see from these noble *hadiths*, Muslim brother, the importance of congregational Prayer which you must observe and which must not be avoided, even by a blind man. Treat it as a matter of conscience which must be observed. Recognize that it is a duty for all men of sound mind unless they are excused

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(1) Related by Ahmad.

(2) Related by Ahmad and Abu Dawud.

because of sickness or fear of being placed in peril, or because it will bring about undue hardship or harm. This is one of the most important practices of Islam.

It is permitted for women to attend the congregation in the mosque and their husbands may not prevent them from doing so unless it is feared that harm will come to them. However, it is preferable for women to perform the Prayer in the house rather than in the mosque. The reward for congregational Prayer will be obtained even though there are only two, one of whom is a child or a woman, although the greater the number, the better it is. Congregational Prayer is the most glorious of Islamic religious practices, the greatest of religious acts, whereby the old and the young, the rich and the poor, and the powerful and the weak stand before Allah with no difference between them, all the same. The best of them are those who fear Allah. In congregational Prayer, impartiality, equality, and obedience are visibly evident when the rich, the poor, the ruler, and the subject stand in a single row, meeting in one place. Once Muslims know its meaning and significance how can they ever abandon or neglect it! How can they complain to Allah that Muslims have deserted them and kept away from them?

How the Congregational Prayer Is Performed

If you are a member of a group and you all wish to perform Prayer, you must perform it together and not individually. The Imam should be the one among you who recites the Qur'an best and if you are all equal in this respect then the Imam should be

the one who is most learned and most versed in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. Should you all be equal in these respects then the oldest of you shall be appointed. In the mosques, the Imams are well-known and they lead Prayer, but they must be chosen with care.

After choosing the Imam, he goes forward to perform Prayer with you and stands in front of you in the center of the row. Then he looks at the row in which the congregation is formed and straightens it out. Straightening the row is one of the finer points of the ritual of Prayer. After the Second Call to Prayer the Imam says the Words of Greatness and performs Prayer. You say the words of Greatness after him. A person who is being led in Prayer does not follow the Imam's recitation of the Qur'an except for the Opening chapter. He follows the Imam in the movements of Prayer, bows after him, stands up from the bow after him, prostrates himself after him, and so on until the end of the Prayer. The Imam says the Words of Peace and the congregation repeats them after him. It is forbidden for a person being led in Prayer to do anything before or even at the same time as the Imam.

The Imam recites aloud those parts of Prayer which are recited aloud and recites the other parts to himself. But those who are led in Prayer recite only the Opening chapter and that at all times to themselves.

Congregational Prayer may be held with only two persons even though one of them is a child or a woman. If you wish to perform Prayer and there is only one other person with you, the one who is to be led stands to the right of the one who is

leading - but not behind him. If another person comes to join Prayer, the person being led should move backwards to let the third person join him so as to form a row, centered by the Imam who stands in front of them. If those who are following do not know the rule and form up on the right and left of the Imam, he should take them by the arm and push them back so as to form a row behind him. If a person following the Imam is his wife or sister, she must stand behind the Imam and not to his right. It is permissible for a boy to be chosen to lead the men in their obligatory Prayers provided he recites the Qur'an better than them or if he is better versed in theology than them.

He who accomplishes one *Rak`a* with the Imam has attained the benefit of the congregational Prayer. If he has missed any part of Prayer with the Imam, he performs it after the Imam has said the Words of Peace. So if you have missed anything, when the Imam completes Prayer and says the Words of Peace, do not do so but stand up and complete the *Rak`as* which have been missed. It is required by Sunnah that the Imam shall be brief in performing Prayer because the congregation contains those who are weak or aged, or who have urgent physical needs.

Shortening Prayer is achieved only by what is recited after the Opening chapter and not in the bows, prostrations, and elevations which must be performed without haste, for not performing them properly diminishes Prayer. The way in which some Imams and some people rush through Prayer today, bobbing up and down like hens pecking at the ground, is impermissible and renders Prayer invalid. It is not permitted for

a man to perform Prayer standing alone behind the row. If he comes to perform Prayer and finds the row full and can find no place in which to join it, he must gently draw a man from the last row to stand with him and together form a last row. The Prayer of a worshiper who performs it alone behind the Imam is incorrect.

It is not permitted for a person spoken of as immoral or ignorant or who is disliked by the Allah-fearing people, to lead the people in Prayer. Such a person should stand apart to permit someone who is more knowledgeable, upright, and Allah-fearing to come forward. Only a person who is worthy may be appointed Imam, for the Imams are our earthly link with our Lord. We would do well, therefore, to choose our representative from the best of those among us so that they will stand with sincerity before Allah on our behalf.

Ibn `Abbas was reported to have said that Allah's Messenger said,

> "Let your Imams be the best among you for they are your representatives between you and your Lord."[1]

And Al-Hakim quoted the Prophet as saying,

> "If you wish to be made happy by having your Prayer accepted, then your Imams should be the best among you, for they are your representatives between you and your Lord."[2]

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(1) Related by Al-Darqutni.

(2) *Tarjamat Murshid Al-Fatwa.*

Joining Prayers Together

A traveler may perform two Prayers together at one time. He may, for example, join the Noon Prayer and the Afternoon Prayer, delaying the Noon Prayer until the time comes for the Afternoon Prayer and performing both of them together at the latter time. Each Prayer is separate from the other. In this example, the Afternoon Prayer would be performed first followed by the Noon Prayer. He makes only one Call for both Prayers but makes separate Second Call (*Iqama*) for each Prayer. This is called the Joining of Lateness. In the Joining in Advance, the Afternoon Prayer might be joined to the Noon Prayer and performed at noon or the Night Prayer might be brought forward to the time of the Sunset Prayer. There is disagreement between jurists regarding the latter type of joining but the preferred ruling is that it is permitted. Both types of joining are permitted when there is need for them.

Imam Ahmad and others related that the Prophet, at the time of expedition of Tabuk, if he was starting out before the sun began to decline from its zenith, used to postpone the Noon Prayer until the Afternoon Prayer and perform them both together. If he was starting out after the sun began to decline, he would perform the Noon Prayer and the Afternoon Prayer together and then go. Imam Ahmad quoted ibn `Abbas to the same effect and added to it the joining of the Sunset Prayer and the Night Prayer.

The only Prayers which may be joined are the Noon and Afternoon or the Sunset and Night Prayers. Joining the

Morning and the Noon Prayers for example, or the Sunset and the Afternoon Prayers is not allowed. Joining is restricted to those Prayers which was so ordained to relieve the lot of the people.

Friday Prayer (*Jum'ah*)

A. General

Islam is a great social religion. It fosters and demands that people meet. It abhors and shuns. Not only does it give Muslims every opportunity to get to know each other and to be on intimate terms with each other but indeed it commands that they should do so.

Friday is a glorious day in Islam. It is the finest day in which the sun rises and is a feast day for Muslims. It is the day in which they remember Allah and glorify Him. In this great weekly meeting they gather in His houses, leaving aside all worldly affairs. in order to carry out their religious obligations, to listen to the sermons of the preachers, and to receive spiritual guidance from the learned.

The Friday sermon is a lesson in which the preachers deal with the daily problems of society. New problems constantly appear which demand from Muslims enlightenment from the torch of Islam. These problems affect every facet of their lives. In this way, those who are closely tied to their religion retain their renown and distinction and remain so as long as they are pious and Allah-fearing.

Performance of the Friday Prayer is one of the obligations imposed by Allah as made clear in the Glorious Qur'an:

> ﴿O ye who believe, when the Call is proclaimed to Prayer on Friday, hasten earnestly to the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business. That is best for you if ye but knew, and when Prayer is finished, then may ye disperse through the land, and seek of the bounty of Allah, and celebrate the praise of Allah often that ye may prosper.﴾
>
> (Q. 62:9-10)

It is an obligatory duty for every male, adult and free Muslim who is in residence. It applies to every group of people who live together even though they live in a hamlet.

It was related that the Messenger of Allah intended to burn those who do not attend the Friday Prayer,

He performed this duty constantly from the time Allah ordained it until his death. Concerning prohibiting the abandoning of the practice, he said from his pulpit,

> "Let people refrain from neglecting the Friday Prayers else Allah will make their hearts sealed and they will be among those who are heedless."[1]

(1) Related by Muslim.

He also said,

> "He who deliberately neglects three Friday Prayers, Allah will make a seal on his heart."[1]

In his sermon on the day when the Friday Prayer was made obligatory, the Prophet said,

> "Let it be known that Allah has prescribed the Friday Prayer for you on this spot, on this day, in this month, in this year, until the Day of Judgment. Whoever neglects it during or after my lifetime even though he has an Imam, upright or oppressor, may Allah grant him no reunification. Neither will his affairs be blessed. There shall be no Prayer for him, no alms-giving, no Pilgrimage, no Fast. There will be no righteousness in him until he repents. Whoever repents, will be pardoned by Allah."[2]

B. How to Perform the Friday Prayer

The Friday Prayer is only permissible in the mosques wherein Muslims congregate and their Imam preaches to them, giving them advice and spiritual guidance. The time for the Friday Prayer is the time of the Noon Prayer although some

(1) Related by Abu Dawud.
(2) Related by Ibn Majah.

have held that it is permitted before the sun has reached its zenith. It is according to the guidance of Sunnah that on Friday you should take a bath and that you should put on sweet smelling perfumes, and wear your best and cleanest clothes, then with tranquility and dignified bearing, betake yourself to the mosque.

On entering mosque one should say,

> "O Lord, open to me the gates of Your mercy."

Before you sit down to await the Prayer, perform two *Rak`as* as a traditional greeting to the mosque. The Prophet said,

> "If any one of you enters the mosque, do not sit until you have performed two *Rak`as*."

After this be seated and listen to the recitation of the Qur'an, meditating on the meaning of the verses. If there is noone reciting the Qur'an, you can do no better than to sit down quietly, contemplating and remembering Allah. When the time comes to perform Prayer the muezzin makes the Call, the recitation ends, the worshipers arise and offer up two or four voluntary *Rak`as* to Allah before the preacher mounts the pulpit. These *Rak`as* on Friday are voluntary and are not a confirmed Sunnah, as some people think. Voluntary *Rak`as* are desirable at all times, but while the Prophet used to encourage them on Fridays, it was not specified or demanded that they be performed. The learned men of Islam say that voluntary *Rak`as* are permitted before the Friday Prayer as long as the Imam has not appeared on the pulpit; but once he has appeared there must be no praying or speaking.

At the end of the voluntary Prayer one observes the preacher going up to the pulpit. In front of him the muezzin makes the Call to Prayer and you answer him. You must then devote your whole attention to the sermon. You are forbidden to speak during the sermon even though you only say "*Sah!*" means "keep silent" to the person beside you, otherwise the Prayer will be invalid. Whoever speaks has not performed the Friday Prayer.

After the Imam ends from delivering the two sermons which are separated by short sitting between them, he goes down the pulpit. The Caller makes the Second Call to Prayer, then the Imam leads the people and perform two *Rak'as* as a Friday Prayer Friday Prayer is like the Morning Prayer, they are not different except in making intention. In the Morning Prayer you intend to perform the Morning Prayer, while in Friday you intend to perform the Friday Prayer.

At the end of the two *Rak`as* the Imam says the Words of Peace and the worshipers say them after him. After this a man should perform the Sunnah of Friday which follows the Prayer of duty. This may be done either in the mosque or in home. It consists of four *Rak`as*. It was reported that the Prophet said,

> "If any one of you performs the Friday Prayer, let him perform four *Rak`as* after it."

It has also been related that it should be only two *Rak`as*.

By performing these two voluntary *Rak`as,* the obligation of Friday, its supererogatory requirements and other proprieties

are completed. Afterwards people may go their own way in search of Allah's grace and favor. Almighty Allah says,

> ﴾And when the Prayer is finished, then may ye disperse through the land and seek of the bounty of Allah, and celebrate the praise of Allah often that ye may prosper.﴿
>
> (Q. 62:10)

The Prayer of the Two Feasts

1. The Prayer of the Feast of Fast Breaking (*Al-Fitr*).
2. The Prayer of the Feast of Sacrifice (*Al-Adha*).

Each of these Prayers consists of two *Rak`as* during which the Imam recites aloud. There is no Call to Prayer and no Second Call. No Prayers of any kind are performed before or after them and the time to perform them is from twenty minutes after sunrise until noon.

A. The Prayer of the Feast of Fast Breaking

Following the obligatory fasting of the blessed month of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate with the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast which lasts three days. They welcome this Feast with Prayer and supplications, and by giving praise to Almighty Allah.

After a Muslim has performed the Morning Prayer on the first day of Shawwal he goes to the mosque, having first performed the body-washing, dressed himself in his best clothes, purified himself, perfumed himself, and broken his fast even though only with a few dates. All these things follow the Sunnah of the Prophet during the Feast.

It is recommended to start saying *Takbir* (in a certain formula which will be mentioned later) after performing the Dawn Prayer. As for its set time, it begins twenty minutes after sunrise.

The Imam stands up to perform this blessed Prayer(1) with the people. The people form themselves into rows which he straightens. He then says the Words of Greatness and the people say them after him. Then all recite the Opening supplication which reads "Glory and praise be to our Lord... etc." or the other supplication which begins "I turned my face to... etc." and this is done secretly. After this the Imam says the Words of Greatness seven times, with the congregation repeating after him, on each occasion raising his hands to his ears, then putting them together on his chest. The congregation follows likewise. Between each recitation of the Words of Greatness they all recite to themselves the Words,

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(1) It is recommended that the Imam should explain how this Prayer is performed before it starts because being performed only twice a year it may be that many people are not very sure how to perform it.

«سُبْحَانَ اللَّه ، والحَمدُ للَّه ، ولاَ إله إلاَ اللَّه
واللَّهَ أَكْبَرُ .»

"Glory be to Allah. Praise be to Allah. There is no god but Allah. Allah is the Greatest."

These Words of Greatness, totaling eight at all, are completed before the recitation of the Qur'an begins. The Imam then recites the Opening chapter aloud and it is recommended that he should recite the whole of the chapter beginning "glorify the Name of thy Guardian Lord, the Most High" after it. He then bows and makes two prostrations in the customary way. In the second *Rak`a* the Imam says the words of Greatness five times, separating each by the words,

«سُبْحَانَ اللَّه ، والحَمدُ للَّه ، ولاَ إله إلاَ اللَّه
واللَّهَ أَكْبَرُ .»

"Glory be to Allah. Praise be to Allah. There is no god but Allah. Allah is the Greatest."

He then recites the Opening chapter aloud and it is recommended that he should recite the whole of the chapter of Al-Ghashiyah beginning "Enveloper". After this he bows and prostrates then sits back to say the Words of Witness and recite the whole of the Words of Greeting. He concludes Prayer with the Words of Peace followed by the Words of *Takbir* in which he is joined by the worshipers saying,

«اللّهُ أكبَرُ ، اللّهُ أكبَرُ ، اللّهُ أكبَرُ ، اللّهُ أكبَرُ .
لاَ إلهَ إلاّ اللّهُ ، اللّهُ أكبَرُ ، اللّهُ أكبَرُ ولِلّه
الحَمْد.»

"Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest. There is no god but Allah. Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest and Praise be to Allah."

These words end the Prayer.

The Imam then mounts the pulpit to deliver the Feast Sermon. This should be a serious address concerning the meaning of the Feast and should deal with how Muslims should be loyal and sincere towards each other during the Feast, forbearing, exchanging visits, and rendering assistance to each other. The Feast sermon should deal with piety, the performance of good deeds, obedience to the All-Merciful and All-Compassionate, and the abandonment of discord, hypocrisy, inequity, and disobedience.

At the end of the sermon, the preacher comes down from the pulpit and shakes hands with the congregation and everyone exchanges greetings and expressions of joy.

B. The Prayer of the Feast of Sacrifice

The Prayer of the Feast of Sacrifice is exactly the same as the Prayer of the Feast of Fast Breaking in the Words of Greatness, the recitations, and the form it takes. The only difference is in the intention; in one you intend to perform the

Prayer of the Feast of Fast Breaking; in the other you intend to perform Prayer of the Feast of Sacrifice.

In the Feast of Fast Breaking there is no need to say the Words of *Takbir* on leaving one's house for the mosque, but in the Feast of Sacrifice, it is required by Sunnah that you say them from the time of leaving house until your arrival at the mosque.

Important Note

The distinguished Imams are all in agreement with what I have told you regarding Prayers of the two Feasts with the exception that they differ concerning the exact number of times the Words of Greatness should be recited due to variations in pertinent evidence. The pattern most widely known and for which the evidence is the strongest - and the opinion held by most Imams - is that which I have written about, that is, seven times in the first *Rak`a* and five times in the second.

This may be compared with the view held by the Hanafis who say the Words of Greatness four times, plus once before the recitation in the first *Rak`a* and three times in the second *Rak`a* after the Opening chapter and the chapter of the Qur'an come to an end. They say the Words of Greatness for the bow. Every time they say the Words of Greatness during the Prayer of the two Feasts, the Imam and the worshipers raise their hands. Both methods are correct and are based upon evidence.

Women Going out for *`Id* Prayer

The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered women to go out and attend the Prayer of both Feasts of (Fast Breaking and Sacrifice) without distinction between single, married, young and old, even the menstruating woman was also ordered to go for the Prayer of *`Id* but she does not join the congregation of Muslims on the effect of her legal excuse. The menstruating women are allowed to go and witness the good and listen to the sermon and supplication of Muslims. This is confirmed by *hadith* which was reported by Umm `Atiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) who said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) ordered the aged, menstruating and single women to go and witness Prayer of the two Feasts. The menstruating women were separated from the congregation but they witness the good and supplications of Muslims." Umm `Atiyyah said, "O Messenger of Allah, not all of us have a garment to wear." The Prophet replied, "let the ones who have lend the ones who have not."

Takbir during Prayer of *`Id*

It is preferred to start the *Takbir* after the sunset of the last day of Ramadan until the Imam enters in Prayer of *`Id.* This *Takbir* should be proclaimed in every place, this includes houses, roads and markets, during night and day, in the crowds of people to urge them to share you, by the traveler and the settled, man and woman. The Qur'an says,

﴾ And magnify Allah for having guided you... ﴿

(Q: 2-185)

Al-Bukhari reported Umm `Atiyyah as having said,

> "We were ordered to go out for Prayer of the two Feasts and the menstruating women followed the people and repeating their *Takbir.*"

As for *Takbir* during the Feast of Sacrifice Almighty Allah says,

> ﴿He has subjected them to you, that you may magnify Allah that He has guided you.﴾
>
> (Q: 22-37)

> ﴿And remember Allah during a (prescribed) number of days...﴾
>
> (Q: 2-203)

In defining these days ibn `Abbas said,

"They are the days of Tashriq (the three days following the Feast of Sacrifice)." But `Ali and ibn Mas`ud said. "These days are reckoned from the morning of the day of Arafa until the time of the Afternoon Prayer in the last day of (Mina)."[1]

The Formula of *Takbir*

The most sound and widely held formula of *Takbir* is what `Abd Ar-Raziq has reported from Salman who said,

> "In *Takbir* say, 'Allah is the Greatest: Allah is the Greatest; surely Allah is the Greatest.'"

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(1) Related by ibn Al-Mundhir.

And it is also reported from `Umar and ibn Mas`ud that the formula of *Takbir* runs as follows,

> "Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest; there is no god but Allah and Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest. Praise be to Allah."

And it is recommended only for men to loud their voice during saying *Takbir*.

Prayers in Particular Situations

I. Performing Prayer by One Who Is Sick

If it is impossible for a sick person to stand, he should perform Prayer seated, bowing and prostrating himself from this position. If he is unable to bow or prostrate himself he should make a token gesture with his head, bringing it lower for a prostration than for a bow. If he is unable to sit, he should perform Prayer lying on his side facing the direction of the *Ka`ba*. If he is unable to do that, he should perform Prayer lying on his back with his legs pointing towards the *Ka`ba* and making token gestures for the bows and prostrations. Should he be unable to do even this, then Prayer is postponed. Such is the importance of Prayer in Islam that you must perform it no matter what your condition. You may not ignore this duty even though you are sick. For this, glory be to Almighty Allah, the only One.

II. Prayer of a Traveler

﴾Allah intends every facility for you: He does not want to put you to difficulties.﴿
(Q. 2:185)

Islam is the religion of ease. Allah does not impose discomfort upon anyone, nor does He make commands unless

they are capable of being carried out. Because of the hardships which have to be endured during a journey, Allah has permitted that four *Rak`as* be reduced to two. Some of the sound *hadiths* hold that Prayer was originally prescribed as two *Rak`as,* this number is increased up to four *Rak`as* for the one who is settled, but shortened for the traveler. Therefore, if you are traveling, shorten the Noon Prayer to two *Rak`as* instead of four and likewise the Afternoon and Night Prayers. But the Sunset and Morning Prayers remain as they are and are not shortened.

As for the voluntary and supererogatory Prayers it is enough to perform only two *Rak`as* before the Morning Prayer and the Prayer of *Witr.* Shortening Prayer is a concession and gift from Allah to the worshipers who fear Him and they must accept the gift, for Allah wants you to accept His concessions as He wants you to accept His prescribed laws. You are therefore required to shorten Prayer while traveling and this is the duty that should be observed. There is no difference whether you are traveling by air, by car, by ship, by train, by camel, or on foot. All those forms are called traveling and in all of them Prayer is shortened without distinction as to the mode of travel.

Shortening of Prayer lasts as long as the person is traveling. When he takes up residence in a country he should then complete Prayer with four *Rak`as,* but there are various views as to what constitutes a period of residence during which Prayer is performed in full. Imam Al-Shafi`i said, "If he intends to stay in a place for four days, his journey ends with his arrival

and the day of arrival and departure should not properly be reckoned (as part of the term of residence)." Abu Hanifa said, "He continues to be a traveler unless he intends to stay in a town or village for fifteen days or more." According to others, he may shorten Prayer all the time unless he decides to stay permanently.

During the war with the Hawazin, in the year of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet shortened his Prayer for eighteen or nineteen days. If a man arrives at a town but does not intend to stay in it for any specific period saying, "I will leave tomorrow or the day after," then delays his departure because it is not convenient to leave, his Prayer continues to be shortened even though this state of affairs continues for years. If a man returns to his own country from a journey, he performs Prayer in full even though he does not intend to stay there. If a person should miss a Prayer during a journey he performs two *Rak`as* in his residence. For example, if a person from Baghdad was in Egypt when the time for the Noon Prayer arrived but was unable to perform it because of his preoccupation with his journey, then boarded an airplane to Baghdad which he reached after the Afternoon Prayer, he would perform two *Rak`as* for the Noon Prayer and four *Rak`as* for the Afternoon Prayer. The reverse applies also, in that a person missing Prayer in his residence must perform four *Rak`as* on his journey.

There are differing views as to what is the specific period of the journey on which the rules are determined. Some say it should be three days and nights by camel or on foot and others say differently. The opinion of the scholars of *Hadith* is that there is nothing which specifies the length of the journey during which the traveler shortens Prayer. One must refer to what is

defined as a journey in language and in law. The Glorious Qur'anic verse says,

> ﴿When ye travel through the earth there is no blame on you if ye shorten your Prayers.﴾
>
> (Q. 4:101)

"Traveling through earth" holds true for every journey except going for a walk or a picnic during which Prayer is not shortened. Shu`ba related from Yahya ibn Al-Hina'i that the latter said,

> "I asked Anas about shortening the Prayer and he said: 'If the Messenger of Allah went three miles[1] or three parasangs, he used to perform the Prayer with two *Rak`as*."[2]

The traveler may not shorten Prayer until he has left the town with its suburbs and gardens completely behind him. A traveler may perform the Prayer as the Imam of the residents where he is traveling in which case he performs two *Rak`as* then says the Words of Peace, the residents completing the full Prayer by themselves. It is desirable that such an Imam should say to the residents, after saying the Words of Peace, "Complete your Prayer for I am a traveler."

It is also permitted for a traveler to perform Prayer behind a resident, following his example. He may shorten Prayer or perform it in full as do the Imam and the congregation. It is better to perform Prayer in full for ibn `Abbas was asked, "Why

(1) Note the modern measure. The mile referred to was equal to 4.000 cubits or approximately 1250 metres depending on the country.

(2) Related by Muslim.

should the traveler perform two *Rak`as* if he is alone and four if he is with the Imam?" He answered "That is according to Sunnah."(1) Ibn `Umar said, "If I am with the Imam I perform four *Rak`as*. If I am praying alone, I perform two."(2)

III. The Funeral Prayer (*Janazah*)

Islam respects a Muslim be he alive or dead. If a Muslim dies, the religion commands us to bathe, perfume, and wrap him in a shroud. Then, we should pray over him. Taking him to his final resting place, we bury, and invoke a blessing over him.

The Funeral Prayer is a collective obligation. If it is performed by some people, the others will be absolved of sin. It is a mercy and honor for the dead person and takes the following form.

The deceased is laid pointing towards the *Ka`ba*. The Imam stands at the head and shoulder of the deceased if he is a man and at the waist if it is the funeral of a woman. The worshipers stand to the right, the left, and behind him. The Imam says the Words of Greatness four times and raises his hands on each occasion. The worshipers say them with him.

A. The First Words of Greatness

The Imam and the congregation recite, to themselves, the opening supplication which reads,

(1) Related by Ahmad in his Musnad.
(2) Related by Muslim.

« سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمدِكَ ، تَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ.
وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ ، وَلاَ إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ » .

"Praise and Glory be to Allah. Blessed be Your Name. Exalted be Your Majesty and Glory. There is no god but You."

Then, they recite the Opening chapter of the Qur'an.

B. The Second Words of Greatness

The worshipers recite the Words of Abraham which are contained in the last Words of Witness of the Words of Greetings. They are,

« اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ،
وبَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا
بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي
العَالَمِينَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ . »

"O Lord, pray upon Muhammad and his family as You prayed upon Abraham and his family. Give Your blessing to Muhammad and his family as You gave Your blessing to Abraham and his family in the two worlds. You are the Most Praised, the Most Wonderful."

C. The Third Words of Greatness

Each one says separately this private Prayer:

« اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِحَيِّنَا وَمَيِّتِنَا ، وَشَاهِدِنَا وَغَائِبِنَا وَصَغِيرِنَا وَكَبِيرِنَا ، وَذَكَرِنَا وَأُنْثَانَا ، اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ أَحْيَيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَأَحْيِهِ عَلَى الإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ تَوَفَّيْتَهُ فَتَوَفَّهُ عَلَى الإِيمَانِ . »

"O Lord, forgive us who are alive and those who are dead, those who are present and those who are absent, our young and our old, and our men and our women. O Lord, he who is among us to whom You have brought life, let him live as a Muslim. He whom You have caused to die, let him die in the Faith."

D. The Fourth Words of Greatness

They say this private supplication,

« اللَّهُمَّ لَاتَحْرِمْنَا أَجْرَهُ وَلَاتَفْتِنَّا بَعْدَهُ ، وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلَهُ »

"O Lord, do not deny us the reward which is his. Do not expose us to temptation after his death. Forgive us and forgive him."

The Imam concludes the funeral Prayer with the Words of Peace, moving his head to right and left saying,

السَّلامُ عَلَيكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّه

"Peace and the Mercy of Allah be upon you."

IV. Funeral Prayer for a Child and the Absentee

The procedures of Funeral Prayer are the same regardless of the deceased person, old or young, absentee or the settled.

According to the Sunnah of the Prophet, if the deceased person was a child, it is preferred to pray for his parents. After a person completed the supplication in the third Words of Greatness, it is preferable to add the following:

« اللَّهمَّ اجْعلْهُ ذُخراً لوالدَيه وفُرْطاً وأَجْراً وَشَفيعاً مُجَاباً ، اللَّهُمَّ ثَقِّلْ به مَوَازِينَهُمَا ، وَأَعْظِمْ بِهِ أُجُورَهُمَا ، وَأَلْحِقْهُ بِصَالِحِ المُؤْمنِينَ ، وَقِهِ بِرحْمَتِكَ عَذَابَ الجَحِيمِ . »

"O, Lord, make him a treasure for his parents, and make him a fore-runner and a reward, and make him intercessor and accept his intercession. O Lord, cause him to make their scales weigh heavy and their reward magnificent, and make him a companion of the virtuous faithful, and protect him by Your Grace from the torment of Hell."

It is also permitted to offer the Funeral Prayer for the absentee. The Prophet prayed the Absentee Prayer for Negus

(the king of Abyssinia) when he died and it became a Sunnah from that day. It is also permitted to perform the Absentee Prayer for one dead person or more, so if a group of Muslims martyred in a certain country, the Muslims are required to offer the Funeral Prayer for the Absentee for them.

After Prayer, the deceased is carried to his final resting place, escorted with dignity, respect and supplication. At his final resting place it is required by Sunnah that those at the funeral should repeat the supplication for the dead asking on behalf of the deceased for Allah's forgiveness, mercy, pleasure, and steadfastness when, alone, the two angels question him about his Lord, his religion, and his Prophet. The Prophet used to say at this very time,

> "Seek forgiveness for your brother and ask for steadfastness for him, for he is being questioned."

At this time we also ask Allah to inspire us to give the correct answer when we are put to the question, for all must taste death. We ask Allah to have compassion for us in our exile in this world and at the time of our death, in the loneliness of the grave, and when we stand before Him. We ask Him to make easy for us the agony of death. He is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

V. The Prayer for Allah's Guidance (*Istikhara)*

In all his affairs, a Muslim seeks the help or power of his Exalted Lord. If something should happen to him he takes refuge in Prayer in which his soul is comforted and his anxieties eased. If he must make an important decision, he turns to Prayer to seek Allah's Guidance. If Allah guides him to an action, he goes forward with it, being unconcerned with the outcome, for Allah is with him. But if Allah guides him to abandon his project for another, he thinks no more about it.

The Prayer for Allah's Guidance is one of Allah's blessings. In it a worshiper faces his Lord, seeking His guidance and asking from Him that which will be to his advantage, that which Allah would choose for him, and that which would be in his best interest.

It is a matter of Sunnah that the Prophet customarily taught his Companions the private Prayer for Guidance just as he taught them the verses of the Qur'an. If a Muslim is preparing to embark on an important task, he should pray it and ask the guidance of his Lord. He should do as his Lord directs him, whether it means to follow or to abandon his course. The proper manner in which to perform the Prayer for Guidance is to perform two *Rak`as* in addition to the obligatory duties and then, at the end of Prayer to recite the Words of Peace followed by the private Prayer for guidance. Finally, one states that which he desires, and then searches his heart. If he inclines to the matter, he should proceed with it. However, if he desists the matter, he should abandon it. A Muslim never gives up something better. Here is the *hadith* of the Messenger of Allah

in which he instructs us the Prayer for Allah's Guidance,

«إذا هَمَّ أَحدُكُمْ بالأَمرِ فَلْيَركَعْ ركْعَتَين (من غَيْرِ الفَريضَة) ثُمَّ ليَقُلْ : اللَّهُمَّ إنِّي أَستَخيرُكَ بعلْمكَ وأَسْتَقْدرُكَ بقُدْرَتكَ وأَسْأَلُكَ من فَضْلكَ العَظيم ، فَإنَّكَ تَقْدرُ ، ولاَ أَقْدرُ ، وتَعْلَمُ ولاَ أَعْلَمُ ، وأَنْتَ علاَّمُ الغُيُوب .
اللَّهُمَّ إنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذا الأَمْرَ (ويُسَمِّي الأَمْرَ الذى هَمَّ بفعْله) خَيْرٌ لي في ديني ومَعَاشي وعَاقبَةُ أَمْري - أَو قَالَ عاجلُ أَمْري وآجله فَاقْدرْهُ لي - ويَسِّرْهُ لي ، ثُمَّ بارِكْ لي فيه ، وإنْ كُنْتَ تعلَمُ أَنَّ هَذا الأَمْرَ (ويُسَمِّيه أَيْضاً) شَرٌّ لي في ديني ومَعَاشي وعَاقبَةُ أَمْرى ، أَو قَالَ عَاجلُ أَمْرى وآجله فَاصْرفْهُ عَنِّي واصْرِفْني عَنْهُ ، واقْدرْ ليَ الخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ ارضني به .»

"If anyone of you is concerned about a matter of importance, let him perform two *Rak`as* other than the obligatory ones. Then let him say, 'O Lord, I seek Your guidance, Your Knowledge; I ask You to decide for Your glorious favor, for You decree and I do not. You know and I do not. You are He Who knows the invisible. O Lord, if You know that this matter (and here he states the matter which concerns him) is of benefit to me

in my religion, in my livelihood, and in its outcome (or he says 'my present time and the time to come'), decide it for me, and make it easy for me, and bless it for me. And if You know that this matter (and here he names it again) is bad to me in my religion, in my livelihood, and in its outcome (or he says 'my present time and the time to come'), turn it from me and divert me from it. Decree good for me wherever it may be and make me pleased with it."

VI. The Prayer for the Eclipse of the Moon and the Eclipse of the Sun

Islam has given us a fine sense of property. It has taught us to take refuge in Allah whenever something happens to us. We worship Him and we ask Him for help and assistance. We rely on Him and leave Him to decide what shall be done and how it shall be done.

The eclipses of the moon and the sun are two natural phenomena which frequently cause dismay and unrest in those who witness them. For this reason, it is the way of Islam to perform a special Prayer for these phenomena to which the faithful bondmen resort in order to confide in their Lord. They recite from His Book and calm their souls through this Prayer and confiding in Allah. Afterwards they listen to the sermon in which the preacher speaks of the lesson to be learned from these manifestations. He draws the attention of the unmindful

to the greatness of the Creator and how He is unrestricted in the universe by His power to act in any way He wishes. ﴾The sun and the moon are some of His signs.﴿ He does not have to answer for what He does, but they do.

The Reason for the Prayer for the Eclipse

The Prayer for the Eclipse was prescribed during the last years of *Hijra*. At that time Ibrahim, the beloved son of the Prophet, died. On the very same day there was an eclipse of the sun and some people said that the sun had eclipsed because of the death of Ibrahim.

This rumor spread until it came to the ears of the Prophet who moved promptly to suppress the heresy and to explain the truth of such a disconcerting matter. Here is the agreed upon *hadith* of Al-Mughira:

> "There was an eclipse of the sun during the time of the Messenger of Allah on the day that Ibrahim died. The people said, 'The sun has eclipsed because of the death of Ibrahim.' The Prophet said, 'The sun and the moon are two of Almighty Allah's signs which do not eclipse because of the death of anyone, nor for his being alive. If you see an eclipse make a private Prayer of Almighty Allah and perform the Prayer until it has passed.'"[1]

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

How to Perform the Prayer for the Eclipse

The Prayer for the Eclipse of the Moon and the Eclipse of the Sun differ in form from the other Prayers. It consists of two *Rak`as* which are, preferably, performed in congregation although a person is permitted to perform Prayer alone. When it is performed in congregation the Imam makes his recitations aloud and at the end of Prayer delivers a short sermon in which he speaks of the lesson to be learned from situations of this nature.

The Prayer begins with the Words of Greatness, then the recitation of the Opening chapter followed by a recitation of an uncomplicated and preferably long passage from the Qur'an. This is followed by a bow after which he stands erect and continues with the recitation before the prostration. After this further recitation, also of an uncomplicated nature, he bows again. He then straightens up and goes on to make his prostration. Each *Rak`a* consists of two bows and two prostrations.

Here is the *hadith* of `A'ishah. It is one of the sound *hadiths* upon which both Al-Bukhari and Muslim agreed.

`A'ishah said,

> "There was an eclipse of the sun during the lifetime of the Prophet. The Prophet went to the mosque where he stood and said the Words of Greatness. He set the people in rows behind him and made a long recitation. Then he said the words of Greatness and made a long bow which is less than the first recitation. Then he

> raised his head and said, 'May Allah hear whoever praises Him. O Lord, Yours is the praise.' Then he stood up and made a recitation which was less than the first. Then he said the words of Greatness and made bow which is less than the first bow. Then he said, 'May Allah hear whoever praises him. O Lord, Yours is the praise.' Then he prostrated himself. Then he performed the other *Rak`a* in the same way until he had completed four bows and four prostrations. The sun was revealed before he finished. He then stood up and preached to the people. He then praised Allah for what He had made to appear and said, 'The sun and moon are two of Almighty Allah's signs which are not eclipsed for the death of anyone, nor for his being alive. If you see either one of them, hasten to Prayer.'"

Malik, Al-Shafi'i, Ahmad, and the majority of scholars hold the opinion that congregational Prayer is a Sunnah for the Prayer for the Eclipse, while Abu Yusuf and Muhammad said that congregation is a condition. The Iraqi Jurists, including Abu Hanifa, said that it is a Prayer to be performed individually. It is related in *Al-Bahr* from *Al-`Itra*) that both methods are correct.

Charity and Forgiveness

May Allah reward our Prophet, the Prophet of Islam, in greater measure as He rewards the Prophet of any other nation.

He (peace be upon him) has let no opportunity pass to further and promote the interests of his community, to seize the opportunity to do good, and to do favor to his people. On the occasion of the eclipse of the moon or the sun the Prophet urged his community to give alms, to remember Allah, to seek forgiveness, and to say the Words of Greatness at this strange phenomenon which is but one of Allah's signs. A sound *hadith* related that the Prophet said,

> "The sun and the moon are two of Almighty Allah's signs which are not eclipsed for the death of anyone, nor for his being alive."

VII. *Istisqa'* Prayer (Seeking the Rain)

In his all affairs, the Muslim takes a refuge with his Lord, asking Him for mercy and seeking His help and succor, because Allah (Exalted and Dignified be He) is the Last Refuge and He is the One Who answers the constrained when he invokes Him.

So, if the rain stops to fall and the drought prevails and it seems that the plants and cattles will perish, Muslims are urged to hasten to their Lord (Exalted and Dignified be He) seeking His mercy and abundant rain and offer the Prayer of *Istisqa'*.

Istisqa' is defined as seeking rain from Allah (Exalted and Dignified be He) in the times of need. Performing this Prayer was strongly recommended by the *hadiths* of the Prophet. Imam Muslim related,

> "The Prophet went out to perform *salat Al-Istisqa'*; he turned his back to the

> people, facing the *Qiblah* and inverted his cloak."

In another version related by Al-Bukhari, he added,

> "He made the recitation loudly."

Hadiths are numerous in this respect.

Forms of *Istisqa'* Prayer

Istisqa' Prayer may be offered in one of the following manners:

1) *Istisqa'* by only supplication from Muslims individually or in group.

2) *Istisqa'* by supplication after every Prayer, even though, it is a voluntary or supererogatory Prayer.

3) The most preferred form of Istisqa' Prayer is that which is performed in a special Prayer. After the Prayer the Imam delivers a sermon during which he admonishes the believers making them mindful and dutiful towards Allah, the Ever-Powerful, the Ever-Wise, urging them to fear Allah, the Exalted, and His torture and punishment. The Imam also encourages the believers to give charity and do all sorts of righteous deeds, leaving off injustice and returning in repentance from their sins. Abominable acts are deemed the cause of rain stopping and drought of rivers and wells and depriving the provision. These acts are also the cause of Allah's wrath and our affliction by fear, hunger, decreasing of riches and products even destroying the villages and towns of the wrongdoers. We seek Allah's refuge from all of these.

How to Perform *Istisqa'* Prayer

The Prayer of *Isisqa'* is a confirmed *Sunnah*). It consists of two *Rak`as* and is performed in the same manner as *`Id* Prayer. The Imam makes the recitation loud preceded by saying the Words of Greatness seven times in the first *Rak`a* and five times in the second one. In the first *Rak`a* the Imam recites the chapter of Al-A`la. And in the second *Rak`a*, he reads the chapter of *Al-Ghashiyah* ! This is preferable to be read, and it is permitted to read chapters otherwise.

The requirements of *Istisqa'* Prayer are very different from that of *`Id* Prayer in that a Muslim does not perfume himself and wear old and lowly clothes which signify the humility and submission before Allah (Exalted and Dignified be He).

Abu Dawud reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) went out for *Istisqa'* Prayer wearing old clothes, in a humble and lowly manner until he reached the place of Prayer.

If the Imam finishes the *Istisqa'* Prayer, he stands up and delivers two sermons, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered the sermon of *Istisqa'* Prayer from above the pulpit. Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that:

> "One day the Prophet (peace be upon him) went out to make *Istisqa'* Prayer. He prayed two *Rak`as* without Call or a Second Call to Prayer. Then he admonished us and offered supplication for Allah, facing the *Qiblah* and raising up his hands. After that he inverted his garment making the right side of it over

the left one and *vice versa*."[1]

It is recommended for the Imam to numerate the supplications and Prayers which are suitable for this respect. In the same way, the Imam is required to invert his cloak turning its inside to outside and *vice versa* and the people follow his suit. Truly, this act signifies the changing of people's state from wretchedness to prosperity, from difficulty to ease, and from anger to pleasure. The Imam raises his hands with supplication praying in a humble and modest manner before the King of kings, the All-Forgiving, repeating the supplication in a loud and secret voice. If he calls upon Allah in secret, the followers calls upon Allah in secret, but if he makes it loudly, the followers support him (by seeking the answer from Allah) asking Allah to accept their Prayer.

Finally, it is better for the Imam to quote the recorded and related Prayers and supplication of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), otherwise, it is permitted to pray with whatever he likes from different Prayers whether related or not. Humility, submission, fearing Allah and seeking His forgiveness should be strongly observed during supplication.

The Messenger's Supplication during the Prayer of *Istisqa'*

"O Allah, give us mercy and do not give us punishment, loss, calamities, or destruction. O Allah, make it upon mountains and hills, farms and trees, and in the streams of vallies. O Allah, make it

(1) Related by Ahmad, Ibn Majah, and Al-Baihaqi.

> around us and not upon us. O Allah, give us a saving rain, productive, plentiful, general, and continuous. O Allah, give us a rain and do not make us among the despondent. O Allah, Your slaves and land are suffering difficulty, hungry and wretchedness that cannot be complained to anyone other than You. O Allah, let our crops grow, and let the udders refilled, bestow upon us from the blessings of the sky, grow for us from the blessings of the earth, and relieve the affliction from us as no one removes affliction than You. O Allah, we seek Your Forgiveness as You are the Forgiving, and send upon us plenteous rains."[1]

Upon hearing the thunder and lightening, it is recommend for a Muslim to say,

> "Exalted be He Who the thunder hymns His praise and the angels out of fright of Him."

And upon the falling of rains, he should say,

> "O Allah, make it fall in plenty, i.e., a powerful and productive rain."[2]

The Muslim is urgently encouraged to supplicte Allah when the rain falls with whatever he desired because during this time

(1) Related by Al-Shafi`i from Salim ibn `Abdullah.
(2) Related by Al-Bukhari.

the supplications are accepted. This is confirmed by the *hadith* narrated by Al-Baihaqi in which he states that the supplications are accepted and answered in four times "when muslims encounter their enemies in the course of *Jihad*, when the rain falls, during the Second Call to Prayer and upon seeing the *Ka`ba*.

Finally, it is recommended for a Muslim to say when the rain falls "We are given the rain by the favor and mercy of Allah."

Conclusion

At the end of this book I ask Allah that He makes it of benefit to people and that it be given to them without expectation of reward for myself in this life. From it, my aim is to serve my religion. There is no success except in Allah; in Him I place my trust and to Him I turn in repentance.

> ﴿Our Lord, You know what we do in secret and what we do openly. Nothing in Heaven or Earth can be hidden from Allah.﴾
>
> ﴿O Lord, make me and my descendants dutiful in the Prayer. O Lord, accept this Prayer. O Lord, forgive me my sins and those of my parents and all the faithful on the Day of Reckoning.﴾

Praise be to Allah

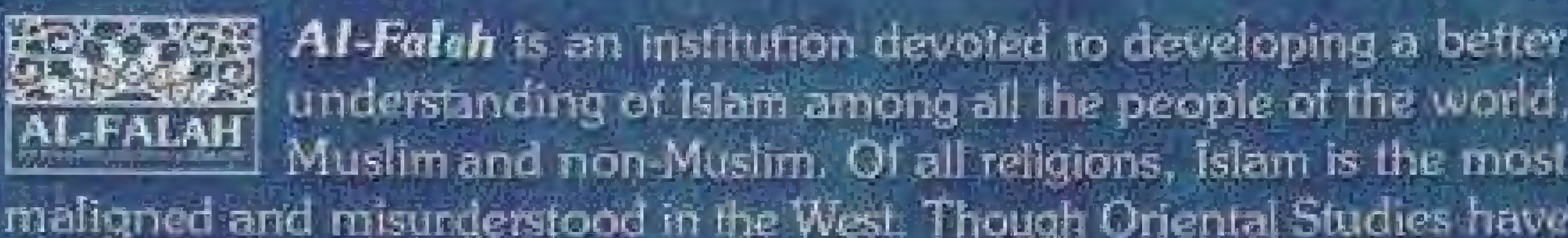


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Since every Muslim needs to learn the rules of *Salah* (the five daily Prayers), *Salat Al-Jumu`ah* (the Friday Prayer), the Congregational Prayer, the Prayer of the two `*Eids* (feasts), *Janazah* (the Prayer for the dead), how to pray while on a journey and *Istikharah* (the Prayer for seeking Allah's guidance), ***The Muslim Prayer Book*** includes instructions for them all, using the simplest of terms, so that young and old, educated and uneducated alike, might benefit thereby.

Sheikh M. M. As-Sawwaf is one of the great Muslim scholars who have devoted their lives to fighting for the sake of Allah both in word and in deed. He denounced the oppressive decision to partition Palestine in 1947 and established a society to protect Palestine. He has traveled to many Muslim countries in Africa and Southeast Asia as a *da`iyah*. His visits played a great role in reviving and activating the spirit of Muslim solidarity as well as in promoting relations between Muslim leaders and their peoples. His first book was *Sarkhat Mu'minah ila Ash-Shabab wa ash-Shabat* (The Cry of a Believing Woman to the Youth, Male and Female).



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